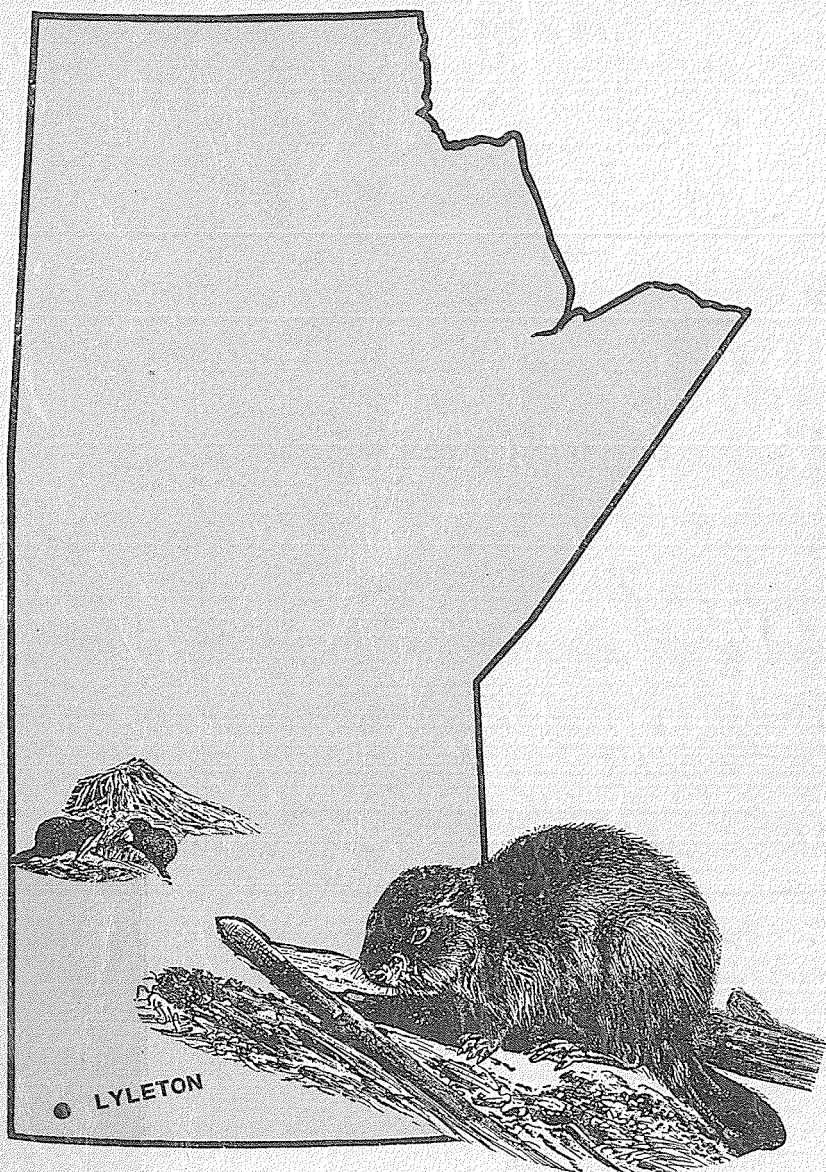



# Gnawing at the Past



F  
5649  
.L94  
GNA  
c.2

Lyleton 1869-1969




PROVINCE OF MANITOBA

MANITOBA

*Provincial Library*

CLASSIFICATION

  
F-5649  
.L94  
Gua.                       
c.2

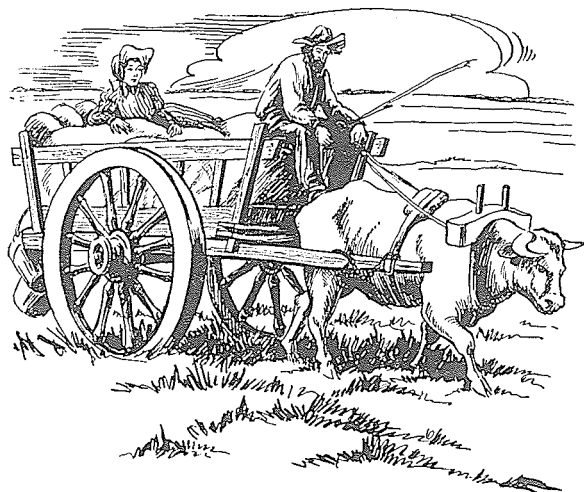
18790

TR-c-7



18790

# Gnawing at the Past



Published in 1969 by  
**LYLETON WOMEN'S INSTITUTE**

Compiled by Connie Davidson  
Printed by Leech Printing Ltd., Brandon, Manitoba

Dedicated to the pioneers of the Lyleton district  
to mark  
Manitoba's Centennial, 1970.





### **LORD AND LADY TWEEDSMUIR**

*Lord Tweedsmuir (John Buchan) was raised to peerage and appointed as Governor-General of Canada in 1935. Lady Tweedsmuir took a special interest in the provision of libraries for rural areas of Canada and encouraged Women's Institutes to compile and publish local histories.*

# Foreword

---

I am so glad to hear that the Women's Institutes of Canada are compiling village history books. Events move very fast nowadays; houses are pulled down, new roads are made, and the aspect of the countryside changes completely in a short time.

It is a most useful and satisfying task for Women's Institute members to see that nothing valuable is lost or forgotten, and women should be on the alert always to guard the traditions of their homes, and to see that water color sketches and prints, poems and prose legends should find their way into these books. The oldest people in the village will tell us fascinating stories of what they remember, which the younger members can write down, thus making a bridge between them and events which happened before they were born. After all, it is the history of humanity which is continually interesting to us, and your village histories will be the basis of accurate facts much valued by historians of the future. I am proud to think that you have called them "The Tweedsmuir Village Histories".

- Susan Tweedsmuir



**MRS. ADELAIDE HOODLESS (nee Hunter) 1857 - 1910**

*Mrs. Hoodless was founder of the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada by organizing the first W.I. in the village of Stoney Creek in 1897. She was also one of the founders of the National Council of Women.*

# L YLETON WOMEN'S INSTITUTE (Founded 1918)

- Mrs. Laura Murray

For several years the Lyleton W.I. members had discussed the writing of the history of the pioneer days in our community. Finally a committee was appointed-Mrs. Hector McNish, Miss Anne Murray, Mrs. Laura Fenton, and Mrs. Laura Murray.

Bits of material had been collected over a number of years; but, in Centennial Year, we set a deadline of November 1, 1968 for the receipt of all accounts and pictures. The response was tremendous, but we regret that we had waited too long to do this as we have lost our real pioneers from whom we could have obtained first-hand information.

Descendants have done their best to fill in for them. Some of our information comes from these descendants as eye witnesses and some as memories. Other information was obtained from early newspapers, visits to Land Title Offices, and from searches in the Archives and among old records, letters and minute books.

No doubt some names and events have been missed and mistakes made in recall. We have made every effort to make this book as authentic as possible and hope the readers will forgive us any unintentional errors and/or omissions.

A very special "Thank you" to our author, Miss Connie Davidson, who put in many hours of work compiling the material we have supplied. She has attempted to retain most of the accounts in their original state and to give credit to each of these writers.

The History Committee of Lyleton Women's Institute is proud to present, in honor of our worthy pioneers, our history, "*Gnewinq at the Pest*".



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Lyleton Women's Institute	vi
Early History of North Antler District	2
Settlement after 1869.....	6
Growth of the Church	19
Steps Towards Education	25
Growth of the Hamlet.....	32
Early Community Life	37
Organizations	51
Pioneers of 1880 - 1910 ..	58
Lyleton District since 1910	118
Final Tribute	127

## BARLY HISTORY OF NORTH ANTLER DISTRICT

— Mrs. Hector McNish

The first known inhabitants of what is now southwestern Manitoba was a tribe of Indians known as the Assiniboin, who had no fixed abode but who roamed in bands over the prairies from the Pembina Mountains to the junction of the North and South Saskatchewan Rivers and south to the country of the Mandans. The name "Assiniboin" is of Ojibway origin, meaning "Stony Sioux". They depended almost entirely on the buffalo for existence and followed the huge herds, making spoil of only what they required. With the coming of the white fur traders, they added to their way of life, the trapping of wild animals and the trading of pelts for goods introduced by the traders. The trails of the buffalo herds became Indian trails, followed later by traders and explorers, and finally, by men and women in search of land on which to settle and establish homes.

Before the land could be settled, it had to be surveyed and marked for occupation. Realizing that this was urgent, to prevent trouble with "squatters" later, the Dominion Government ordered the survey before the land had formally become part of the Dominion. The land-survey was ordered to begin in 1869, at the Lake of the Woods and to extend to the Rockies, working northward from the International Boundary. But before much had been done, the Riel Rebellion interfered with the work and a new Order-in-Council 1871, settled the size of a township to a square of 36 sections of 640 acres each, and the work was resumed. By 1880 the band of surveyed land measured six townships wide, extending along the "Boundary". As soon as this work was under way, the British Government sent out a party of surveyors known as the Boundary Commission (1873) to mark out the International Boundary, which work they completed in two years.

The actual line of Boundary was marked by posts placed one mile apart. These markers, made of iron, were square, tapering towards the top, hollow and fitted over oaken posts driven into the earth. On the south side, in raised letters, were the words "United States"; on the north side was the word "Canada"; while on the east side was the inscription "Convention of London 1818". The west side had no inscription. These markers have since been replaced by very similar ones, but the date 1818 has been eliminated and the west side of the newer posts, bears the inscription, "Treaty of 1908". These posts are now very attractive in their coats of shining aluminum paint (1966).

From Emerson westward ran an old trail, almost parallel to the International Boundary. This, the surveyors followed where they could, keeping as near to the boundary as they found possible, thus giving the path the name, "Boundary Commission Trail", and it became the highway followed by the earliest settlers coming west by way of Emerson, before there were railways. Reaching the Souris River, the trail crossed at the Old Ford, S.E. 27-2-27 W.P.M. and continued westward along the south band of North Antler Creek. On the

S.E. of 3-2-28 (later, the Lee Home, and still later, the Hector McNish home) it was joined by a trail from the northeast, the Yellow Quill Trail, which extended from Fort Garry through Headingley and south of what was later to be Brandon. It crossed Saskatchewan and angled southwest into what is now Montana. The present town of Melita is built on this trail.

The Dominion Lands Act was passed in 1872, throwing all even-numbered sections of land (outside of certain reserved areas) open for homesteads; the odd-numbered sections were reserved for government purposes. A quarter section could be filed on for a homestead by the payment of a \$10.00 registration fee, and ownership was granted at the end of three years of residence on it, if a house and barn had been built and thirty acres cultivated. In 1879 the Act was amended to allow a homesteader to procure an additional quarter section adjacent to the homestead, known as a pre-emption, by paying another \$10.00 registration fee and \$1.00 per acre. By this method, 18 sections of each township were reserved for government purposes, sections 8 and 26 were given to the Hudson's Bay Company, and of the remaining 16, half were held for pre-emption. Therefore, only 32 families could homestead in a township, preventing them from forming a solid block of homesteads for community life. (See the accompanying "System of Survey" on page 4.)

In 1890 the Canadian Pacific Railway Co. extended its Souris branch considerably, toward the coal fields of Saskatchewan. The following year it was pushed forward 82 miles and in 1892, an extension of 47 miles carried the line to Estevan. But before this rail line had been dreamed of, many hardy pioneers had trekked over the prairie, following the afore-mentioned trails, or by coming to Brandon by rail, then trekking southwest, and had established homes for themselves on land secured as homesteads, or which they had purchased if homestead rights were not available.

Many of these first settlers had come from rural Ontario and were well-fitted for the rugged life which lay ahead. But it must have required great fortitude on their part, coming from a well-wooded province, to adjust to life where the horizon line alone marked the extent of their vision. The banks of South Antler Creek were wooded with such trees as Manitoba maple, oak, ash and elm. But North Antler Creek flowed through a treeless plain to S.E. 11-2-28. Large elm trees grew here when the first settlers arrived but their habitat soon receded a couple of miles. North of the woodland was a huge sea of grass, over which small herds of buffalo still roamed and where the harsh cry of the coyote at night was a dismal sound.

But the prairies had their compensations for anything which they lacked, which, added to the prospect of permanent homes, made this new country, not a place to be endured, but a place to be desired. Wild flowers grew in profusion, turning the landscape into an immense patchwork-quilt design, each in its own season. Soon after the snow melted in the spring, furry little buds poked their heads above the ground, to develop into beautiful crocuses, Manitoba's flower emblem. These were followed in turn by violets: blue, yellow and white; buttercups or silver weed, daisy fleabanes, hare bells, commonly called blue-bells, wild roses and sweet peas, white anemones, blue Siberian peas, beard tongue and three-flowered avons which later developed into little nodding heads of white hairs which the children liked to call i'old man's whiskers". The hay meadows were a mass of color as the orange-red lilies bloomed in profusion in July, even the most arid spots were brightened by the beautiful red flowers of the ball cactus, a very spiny little plant the size of a golf ball.

## SYSTEM OF SURVEY.

The Canadian North-West is mid of Townships six miles square, containing thirty-six sections of 640 acres each, which are again sub-divided into quarter sections of 160 acres. Each square on the map to the back of this descriptive matter represents a township of 640 acres. A road allowance, having a width of one chain, is provided for on each section-line running north and south, and on every alternate section-line running east and west. The following diagram shows a township with the sections numbered and apportioned :--

**TOWNSHIP DIAGRAM.**

640 ACRES.						N.
SOURCE.	31	32	33 C. N. W.	34	35	36
	C. P. R.	Gov.	or C. P. R.	Gov.	C. P. R.	'r
	30	29	28	27	26	25 C. N. W.
	Gov.	Schools.	Gov.	C. P. R.	H. B.	C. P. R.
W.	19	20	21 C. N. W.	22	23	24
	C. P. R.	Gov.	or C. P. R.	Gov.	C. P. R.	Gov.
	18	17	16	15	14	13 C. N. W.
	Gov.	C. P. R.	Gov.	C. P. R.	Gov.	or C. P. R.
	7	8	9 C. N. W.	10	11	12
	C. P. R.	H. B.	or C. P. R.	Gov.	Schools.	'r
	6	5	4	3	2	1 C. N. W.
	Gov.	C. P. R.	Gov.	C. P. R.	Gov.	or C. P. R.
						S.

**C. P. R.**—Canadian Pacific Railway Company's Lands. **GOV.**—Government Homestead and Pre-emption Lands. **SCHOOLS.**—Sections reserved for support of Schools. **H. B.**—Hudson's Bay Company's Lands. **C. N. W.**—Canada North-West Land Company's Lands for as far west from Winnipeg as Moose Jaw only. Sections 9, 13, 21, 25, and 33, from Moose Jaw westward, still belong to the Canadian Pacific Railway Company.

It will thus be seen that the sections in each township are apportioned as follows :—  
**OPEN FOR HOMESTEAD AND PRE-EMPTIONS.**—Nos. 2, 4, 6, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 28, 30, 32, 34, 36.  
**CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY SECTIONS.**—1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 31, 33, 35.  
**Nos. 1, 9, 13, ar. 25, 33** along the main line, (Winnipeg to Moose Jaw, sold to the Canada North-West Land Company, the balance of their lauds being principally in Southern Manitoba).  
**SCHOOL SECTIONS.**—Nos. 11, 29 (reserved by Government solely for school purposes).  
**Hudson's Bay Company's Sections.**—Nos. 8 and 26.

In the years when weather conditions were suitable, with enough rain and no late frosts, there were wild fruits to add to the settlers' diet. Chokecherries were plentiful but the fruits most used were the saskatoons. Before airtight glass jars were to be had, the pioneers had learned to dry and store them for winter use, as had the Indians in their time in the area. Luscious wild strawberries grew in patches on the open prairies, small, but oh so good! Raspberries, gooseberries and black currants of a very fine flavor, grew by the creeks and along the edge of the woodland. Plums grew in patches in the open or more scattered in the woods.

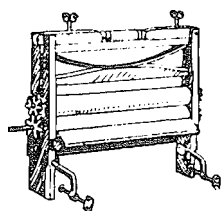
The prairies enjoyed a full quota of birds too. While snow still covered the ground, flocks of horned larks returned from their winter quarters farther south and were soon nesting, hatching and rearing their young while the weather was still cold. Robins, meadow larks, bobolinks, several species of sparrows, swallows and black birds were plentiful. Bitterns, loons and mud hens lived close to the water. Wooded areas were the home of cat birds, king birds, brown thrashers, wrens, warblers, mourning doves and woodpeckers. Game birds included geese, ducks, pintail and square tail grouse and wild turkeys. Crows passed through in the spring on their way to the park lands farther north where they could build their nests of dry twigs and live above the ground. It was not until after the turn of the century that they stayed and became a pest to birds and domestic fowl alike as they searched out their nests to devour the eggs and young birds.

There were fish in the creeks to be had: pike, by the use of rod and line, and suckers which were sometimes caught in quantity by placing fish traps in the creeks, then dried and salted for future use. The most common wild animals were the gophers, saucy little fellows who sat up and whistled as one passed by then scurried to their homes in burrows only to come out and whistle again once danger had passed. They hibernated in winter in their cozy underground nests of dry grass which they had prepared during warm weather. Civilization had no reducing effect on their numbers. They multiplied and became such a menace to grain crops that municipal councils set a bounty on gopher tails and children became adept in trapping and snaring gophers to earn this bounty. Poisoned bait was used too, the bait being placed well into the gopher holes so that birds would not find it. Badgers, foxes and coyotes too, lived in burrows, the entrances to which were large enough to cause many a horse to fall when it stepped into the hole, sometimes with serious results. The skins of these larger animals, also of rabbits, were tanned and used in making warm clothing. A large variety of hare with long ears and strong hind legs called jack rabbits, were plentiful; they were edible and formed one source of food for the early pioneers. These pioneers were to find many hardships their lot, as they hewed homes from this new land.

## ETTLEMENT AFTER 1869

In 1869 the Hudson's Bay Company's control over Rupert's Land was terminated with the payment of 300,000 pounds. Thousands of acres around the company posts and one-twentieth of the fertile land were retained by the company. This agreement came into effect as the Manitoba Act in May 1870 and the name "Manitoba" was given to the area around the Red River Valley.

Ten years later the hunting grounds of the Indian and Metis were being overrun by settlers and villages. Ontario farmers, smitten with the wheat fever, were moving into the southern area which was open to the plow without the drudgery of clearing the land; therefore, free of stumps. By 1881 Manitoba was considerably enlarged westward by an act of the Dominion parliament. In 1882, by Order-in-Council, the districts of Saskatchewan, Assiniboia, Alberta and Athabaska were created, occupying the region between Manitoba and British Columbia. The Canadian Pacific Railway was being pushed west across the prairies and began to distribute pamphlets to encourage settlement. The pamphlet reproduced on page 7, was issued in 1881. The C.P.R. made money, not from selling land, but from carrying settlers and produce. By 1883 the C.P.R. had published a "do-it-yourself" farming and budgeting kit and the reproductions of homesteading regulations. In 1887, by these regulations, every head of a family was entitled to a quarter section. Pre-emptions came to an end in 1891. Advice to the pioneer listed the following pieces of wooden ware as necessary to equip the kitchen of a small family—a wash bench, three sizes of wash tubs, a wash board, a skirt board, a bosom board, a flour barrel cover, chopping bowls, wood boxes, and a clothes wringer.



D504. Clothes Wringer. Royal Amer-lean, solir! white rubber rolls, 14x11 in... 2.50  
Royal Canadian or Dominion ..... 2.75

In 1881 Archie McBean arranged with the Dominion Government to locate settlers on unoccupied homestead land in township 1 and 2 in ranges 27 and 28. In 1882 registration of lands was attended to by A.P. Stuart of Deloraine. Settlers west of Melita must cross the Souris River. Ten

miles north of the border a gravel bottom offered a natural ford known as Sourisford. The soft banks at this location had been worn down by numerous and immense herds of buffalo. The river was often too high to cross in run-off time and claimed many lives. (On some propaganda material sent to the States, this river was described as being navigable for steamers")

By the time the settlers arrived, the only evidences of buffalo were the numerous wallows in low areas, the buffalo robes which were common as lap covers, and the men's buffalo coats which cost \$35.00. Horns and bones lay bleaching along the valley floor and as late as 1885 one old stray was sighted near Melita. Yet Father Lacombe only 30 years before had written of a buffalo

# HOW TO PURCHASE RAILWAY LANDS,

## Regulations for the Sale of Lands of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company.

The Canadian Pacific Railway Company offer (or sale some of the finest Agricultural Lands in Manitoba and the North-West. The lands belonging to the Company in each township within the Railway belt, which extends twenty-four miles from each side of the main line, will be disposed of at prices ranging

### FROM \$2.50 PER ACRE UPWARDS.

DETAILED PRICES OF LANDS CAN BE OBTAINED FROM THE LAND COMMISSIONER AT WINNIPEG.

*(These Regulations are substituted for and cancel those hitherto in force.)*

### TERMS OF PAYMENT.

If paid for in full at time of purchase, a Deed of Conveyance of the land will be given; but the purchaser may pay one-tenth in cash, and the balance in payments spread over nine years, with interest at six per cent. per annum, payable at the end of the year with each instalment. Payments may be made in Land Grant Bonds, which will be accepted at ten per cent. premium on their par value, with accrued interest. These bonds can be obtained on application at the Bank of Montreal, or at any of its agencies in Canada or the United States.

### GENERAL CONDITIONS.

All sales are subject to the following general conditions:—

1.—All improvements pinned upon land purchased to be maintained thereon until final payment has been made.

2.—All taxes and assessments lawfully imposed upon the land or improvements to be paid by the purchaser.

3.—The Company reserve from sale, under these regulations, all mineral and coal lands; and lands containing timber in quantities, stone, slate and marble quarries, lands with water-power thereon, and tracts for town sites and railway purposes.

4.—Mineral, coal and timber lands and quarries, and lands controlling water-power, will be disposed of on very moderate terms to persons giving satisfactory evidence of their intention and ability to utilize the same.

Liberal rates for settlers and their effects will be granted by the Company over its Railway.

*For further particulars apply to JOHN H. McTAVISH, Land Commissioner, Winnipeg.*

## SOUTHERN MANITOBA LANDS.

The completion of the Manitoba South-Western Colonization Railway to Boissevain, a point in the neighborhood of Whitewater Lake, and the probability of a further early extension of that line westward, has made available for homesteading a large area of excellent land, which has hitherto been undesirable in only one particular—the absence of railway communication. This area comprises the land from the Souris River westward to the Missouri Coteau, and from the International Boundary northward to Moose Mountain.

For those desirous of purchasing, the LAND GRANT of the MANITOBA SOUTH-WESTERN COLONIZATION RAILWAY COMPANY, only now placed on the market, offers special attractions. It consists of over 1,000,000 acres of the choicest land in America well adapted for grain growing and mixed farming, in a belt 21 miles wide, immediately north of the International Boundary, and from range 13 westward. That portion of this grant lying between range 13 and the western limit of Manitoba is well settled, the homesteads having been long taken up. Purchasers will at once have all the advantages of this early settlement, such as schools, churches and municipal organization. The fertility of the soil has been fully demonstrated by the splendid crops that have been raised from year to year in that district. The country is well watered by lakes and streams, the principal of which are Rock Lake, Pelican Lake, Whitewater Lake, and the Souris River and its tributaries, while never-failing spring creeks take their rise in the Turtle Mountain. Wood is plentiful, and lumber suitable for building purposes is manufactured at Desford, Deloraine and Wakopa, and may be purchased at reasonable prices. At the two latter points, grist mills are also in operation.

The terms of purchase of the Manitoba South-Western Colonization Railway Company are the same as those of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company.

## PROFITS OF FARMING IN THE CANADIAN NORTH-WEST

In the following calculations every care has been taken not to over-estimate what can be done with care, perseverance and energy:

### FIRST YEAR

Expenditure of settler with family of say five, for provisions, etc., one year	\$250
One yoke of oxen	175
One cow	35
Plow and harrow	35
Wagon	75
Implements, etc	25
Cook-stove, et c., complete	30
Furniture	50
Sundries, say	<u>... 50</u>
Outlay for first year	\$725

At the end of the year he will have a comfortable log house, barn, etc., cattle, implements, and say twenty acres of land broken, ready for seed.

### SECOND YEAR

Will realize from 20 acres-600 bushels of grain at 80 cents	\$480
Expenditure, say	<u>300</u>
Net profit (besides living)	180
And he will have an additional 20 acres of land broken.	

### THIRD YEAR

Forty acres will give him 1200 bushels of grain at 80 cents	960
Expenditure, including additional stock and implements	<u>475</u>
Net profit (besides living)	\$485

And he will, with his increased stock and other facilities, be able to break at least thirty acres.

### FOURTH YEAR

Seventy acres will give him 2100 bushels of grain at 80 cents	\$1680
Less expenditure for further stock, implements and other necessities	<u>600</u>
Net profit	\$1080
And another 30 acres broken.	

### FIFTH YEAR

One hundred acres will give him 3000 bushels of grain at 80 cents	\$2400
Less same expenditure as previous year	<u>600</u>
Net profit	\$1800



hunt he had witnessed near the Turtle Mountains, "On the green rolling prairies stretching before us to the horizon, buffalo were grazing, thousands of them, forming a billowy black lake on the prairie."

The Indians seemed to have vanished with the buffalo. That the Sourisford vicinity had been a natural camping ground is proven yearly by the finds of arrowheads. The Indian burial mounds located in that area were opened in 1908 and yielded ornamental pottery pipes, beads of sea shells, skeletons and bone skewers and knives. The surrounding hills must have offered protection from the weather, a vantage point for enemy approach, buffalo hunting at the front door, berries from the hillside, and fish from the creeks. A few pioneer accounts mention the wandering Indian family which would accept food gratefully in return for fish. Mrs. Roxy Cosgrove recalls that "it was not unusual to see a small band of Indians, often along the railway track, who were considered with curiosity, but never feared by the white children. Tents, of the regular tenting material, would house five or six to a tent and bannocks and grease were cooked in a black iron frying pan on an open fire. After this meal, they would fold up the tents and move along."

Captain Sanderson of the Boundary Commission followed a route north of the 49th parallel mainly to avoid the Sioux Indians. He recorded: "We saw no Indians though our Scouts tried very hard to find some. We encountered enemies far more implacable-Mosquitoes, which appeared in myriads along our track and gave us no rest." Settlers found that oxen would take refuge in a slough, harness, plough and all to escape the torment. Red River pioneers recalled that oxen were sometimes killed by continuous mosquito ravaging. The "Deloraine Times" of 1888 headlined the "good crop of mosquitoes this year". The men, working in the field, often wore sun bonnets with curtains hanging around their necks to keep the pesky insects off. Later mosquito netting would be worn like a veil around wide straw hats. Hanging ribbons of burlap sacking would be attached to harness to discourage feasts of horse meat.

The Canadian settler experienced little trouble with the Indian, but, with settlement, law and order must be established. On May 23, 1873 the North West Mounted Police came into being to prevent bloodshed and to preserve order. With the influx of settlers, the policeman of the plains found his duties increased a hundredfold as he played additional roles of doctor, counsellor, and friend to those seeking homes in the new land. He fought prairie fires, sought those lost in blizzards, arranged weddings and funerals, carried the mails and collected customs.

According to the files of the Commissioner in Ottawa, "In 1885 a patrol consisting of one officer, one *N.e.a.* and twenty-four constables went to southern Manitoba to prevent horse stealing. A request for this protection had been made on behalf of the settlers, by the Attorney-General in Winnipeg. Inspector Sanders distributed his men from Manitou west to Sourisford." People of Lyleton retell the story of horse thieves who visited the area in 1883-84 and made off with five horses and two mules which had been brought by settlers from the east. Horses were very valuable in those days owing to their scarcity and the loss of five faithful servants was a heavy blow to Sam Seifert and John Woolsey.

Further reports disclosed that, "In 1886, during the construction of the Manitoba and North Western Railway line, a number of constables were consigned to the line to prevent liquor trafficking."

Eric Sloane said of the pioneer: "Each man was woodsman, doctor, carpenter, wheelwright, teacher, artist, and sometimes soldier." At first, most of the settlers were bachelors who took land to homestead. Word of anyone returning east raised great suspicion in the community that the traveller might be planning to return with a wife. The surest indication of a woman in a prairie shack was the appearance of curtains and shades on the windows.

Since the source of a wood supply was 40 miles southeast in the Turtle Mountains, the early settler erected a house of sods cut by the shear of the walking plow from the vast expanse of prairie. The sods were approximately two feet long and one wide and the rectangular structure was roofed with fresh sods which continued to grow together if kept moist. Sod houses and rain were not compatible and raised a puzzle-whether to let the children or the bread dough get wet as there certainly wasn't room for both items in the one dry place, under the table.

The area did supply limestone along the creek. Andy Lyle was one of several settlers to build a kiln in the bank of the creek and to fire the limestone for use in building. It took eight to ten days to fire a kiln with wood and required a steady fire 24 hours a day and constant attention.

Wood was never available in any amount for building or for fuel. Bluffs did begin to appear as prairie fires decreased in direct proportion to the increase of cultivated land. But this new land was a veritable orchard for the pioneers who found wild berries, such as gooseberries, raspberries, saskatoons, plums and chokecherries everywhere along the creeks.

When the homesteaders started working the land, they were astonished to find their farm implements stained red by wild strawberries which grew in profusion on the prairies. The breaking of the land and prairie fires have served to remove these berries, much wildlife, and many wild flowers and grasses from the area, but it still attracts deer and duck hunters every fall.

The "Western Progress" in December 1898 carried the following compliment to the newly-settled area along the Antler River, "As we go south from the thriving town of Melita towards the international boundary line, we pass through a large portion of country unsurpassed by any portion of the province or Territories, for its landscape. It is a gentle rolling prairie and lies between the far-famed Turtle Mountains and Souris River. The Lyleton district is composed of Townships 1 and 2 in Ranges 28 and 27. This is a splendid wheat growing section. The homesteads here were being taken up in 1884; a great portion of the portion of the C.P.R. land is sold, the present settlers being largely the purchasers which speaks volumes for the confidence they have in the country. Old settlers think there is no healthier country under the sun. Success is altogether in the hands of the individual. If a person were to travel through the district and see the progress and developments that are going on, they would say, 'No failures there', to see the buildings and the large farms owned by the Lyle Brothers, Murrays, J.W. Henderson, J. Harkness, and A.E. Venton. The South Antler runs through this fine section which is well supplied with bridges. The late premier, Honorable John Norquay, said when asked by an

intending settler, 'Where is the best part of Manitoba?', replied, 'the southwest portion of Manitoba is looked upon as the Garden of the Province'."

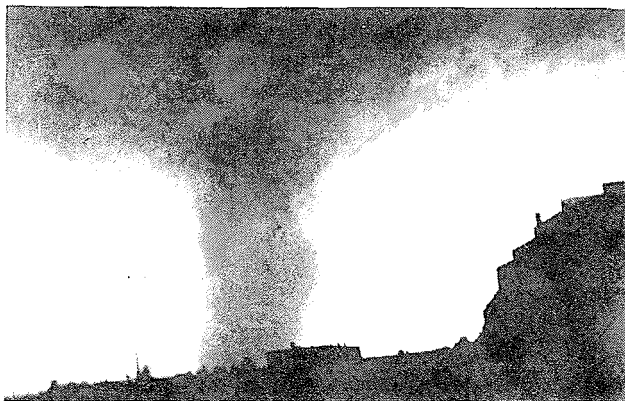
High praise of beauty and productivity which was complemented by a comment in a later edition, "From the amount of agricultural implements being shipped to this point, we must be in the centre of an excellent farming country."

Many references, in the pioneer accounts, were made to the trip west and to the carloads of settlers' effects. Andrew Murray in 1963 published for the Murray family, "In Recollection of Three Generations in Three Provinces", which contained this account of a typical pioneer's journey from Ontario. "On April 1, 1890, Father with the help of his brother moved all his goods and chattels to Hegersville, where they were loaded on box cars. We rode in the box car with the horses. We had a bed of hay piled nearly to the roof at one end of the car. There was a water barrel at the door from which Father watered the horses with a pail and which was refilled often at the stopping places by the railway men.

On the train we ate lunches which had been packed at home and this usually contained cheese and honey. There were no vacuum bottles, camp stoves nor canned goods. Jugs with wide tops and lids which were kept in place with spring clips were used.

I don't know how Father had crowded so much into two box cars. There were seven horses, the feed and us in one; in the other there was a buggy, two wagons, a mower a five-foot Massey binder, three sections of wooden harrows and all our household goods including a barrel of brown sugar. These cars were only big enough to hold 1740 bushels of grain."

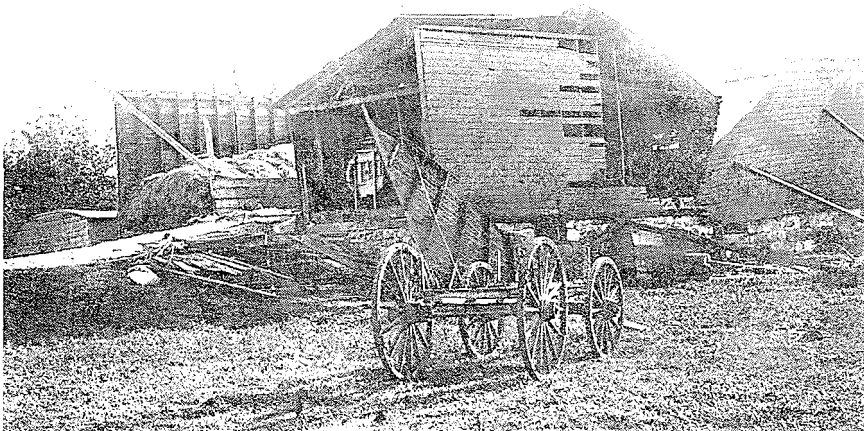
Captain Sanderson also mentioned the excessive heat during the summer and the violent thunderstorms which were often accompanied by gale-force winds and rain. Newspaper accounts bore out his observations-"Melita Progress" in July 1907 reported: "One of the worst wind, rain and hail storms swept the area. Frank Boyle's new barn was smashed to splinters, William Crawford's big barn on the old Sharp place was blown down and part of it carried half a mile." Joseph Holmes had often spoken of "a terrific hail storm which battered the grain so badly that the fields were black. The potato tops were so mutilated that only one sack of marble-size potatoes was harvested. The cattle tethered out were cut and bruised. The wind was so strong that it



*The cyclone of 1911 as it approached Antler, North Dakota.*

tore sods and tar paper off the house and allowed the rain to pour in."

"The Progress" in August 1911 reported: "On Sunday, August 27 about 6 o'clock in the afternoon a cyclone struck this district doing consider-



*The remains of R. Tooke's 40 x 60 foot barn in 1911.*

able damage. R. Tooke's 40 x 60-foot barn was completely demolished; A.G. Lyle had a 14-foot granary and about 60 acres of wheat destroyed; James Richardson has six buildings blown down and two horses killed. On section 20 - 1 - 28, eight 30-foot telephone poles were turned to matchwood. The estimated total loss in this vicinity is placed at \$8,000.00. Two deaths resulted from injuries at Antler, North Dakota, and two more are expected any hour."

It seemed rather a coincidence that this item was being researched on July 8, 1968 when a tornado-type storm hit the same area and the barn on the



*The Tooke barn following the twister of July 1968 which seemed to blow the walls of the barn out.*

original R. Tooke homestead was again demolished and 100 per cent hail damage was experienced within the vicinity.

Winter blizzards were experienced yearly and varied only in duration. The five-day blizzard in March 1902 was described as "the worst seen for years, possibly the worst since the early settlement of the country," However, a summer blizzard was not usual. The "Melita Enterprise" in September 1903 noted that "a violent storm with snow caused drifts to the depth of three to five feet. Twenty-eight calves died from exposure and trees still covered with foliage were broken. Saturday's train did not arrive." Later accounts spoke of the cool weather that prevented sprouting in the stooks, the loss of uncut crops, and floods and mosquito infestation the following spring.

Anne Murray recalled her mother's stories about "the terror experienced by the early settlers in storms and prairie fires. Often the dry grass of the prairies was set on fire by friction sparks, lightning, or careless man, and would race across the land at a terrific rate. Often a fire was set to burn a fire break before the onrushing flames. Most people had rows of furrows or fire breaks plowed around their buildings and stacks." The boundary of the school yard was always marked by a black, freshly plowed firebreak. A cloud of smoke was a signal for everyone to rush to the scene with barrels of water, buckets, and wet sacks to beat out the racing tongues of flame.

The newspaper offered insight into accidents of the area which included gouging by cows and bulls, fatally kicked by horses, cut to pieces in run-aways, drowning in wells, and watery deaths in the Antler River. It was difficult for the present generation to visualize the size and current of the river and creek as reported by the oldsters. The floods in 1946 and again in 1969 served to present what the early settlers experienced every spring.

What a dread any high temperature, bad cut or burn must have been! Along with home remedies of the usual poultice and senna tea variety, the newspapers offered cures for such things as hydrophobia. Oyster shells should be burned over live coals and then mixed with eggs and fried in butter. This was to be eaten three mornings in succession followed by a fast of six hours.

**"To cure a felon ...**Wrap a piece of rock salt, size of a walnut, in a green cabbage leaf, or in wet brown paper. Lay in hot embers, cover as to roast an onion. After 20 minutes, take out and powder as fine as possible. Mix the powder with so much hard soap to make a salve. Apply the salve to the felon. It will, in a few hours (sometimes in a few minutes) destroy the felon, and remove the pain."

The Holmes account recalled that as early as 1883, "the first doctor was Dr. Snyder who lived quite a distance away, and travelled by dog-team in the winter team. Most illnesses had to be treated at home. Balm of Gilead buds were boiled to produce a healing salve. Goose grease rubbed on the chest or the fat side of the skin of a pig placed on the chest were used to break up a "chesty" cold. Sometimes Dr. Thomas' Electric Oil was bought and a few drops on a sugar cube were administered to relieve a cough. Sulphur and molasses was a popular spring tonic." Tea made from senna root is recalled with only one reaction - UGH!

No dentists were available and home remedies were required for tooth-aches. A tooth cavity could be seared with a red hot knitting needle, and of course, a string tied to the tooth and the door knob would perform the operation of extraction! Mothers all seemed to nurse their babies and did not seem to know that a baby could be allergic to milk.

Peddlers came around in wagons with herbs, medicines and bolts of cloth. Local newspapers used to carry warnings against trading with these travelling merchants or advertising mail order houses.

The early grain had been broadcast by hand, harvested with a cradle, and hauled to Deloraine until 1891 when the first train reached Melita. The following year the railway was built as far west as Oxbow and the new town-sites and elevators at Pierson served the Lyleton community for the next ten years.

Each year brought new inventions in farm machinery. Andrew Murray described the seeding methods used by some of the farmers. "Uncle Will used a Gatling gun seeder. It was a sack or canvas stretched around a frame with a shutter in the bottom and a bevel gear, crank, and a paddle wheel which scattered the seed over 10 to 12 feet. The team of horses which were hitched to harrows would stand at the end of the field until a strip was sown. Then the harrows covered the seeds before the birds or gophers got it. I still remember walking after the harrows. My feet were so sore!"

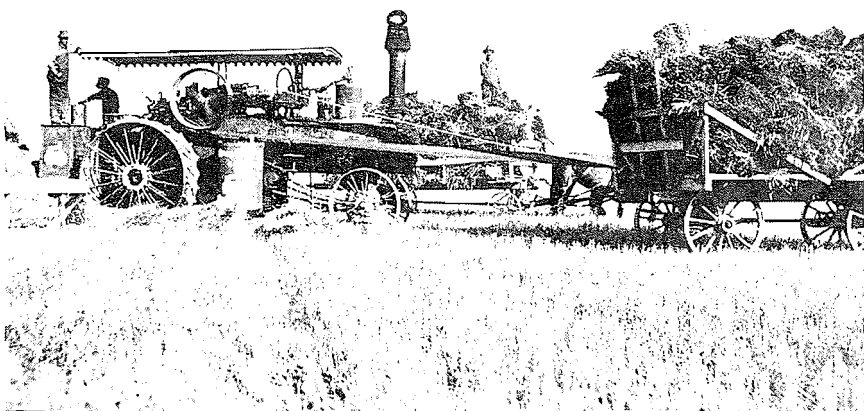
Grain was tied by hand until 1877 when the invention of the knotting bill and turning cord folder brought the wire binder. It was later replaced by the twine binder.

At first threshing was stack threshing when the sheaves were stacked



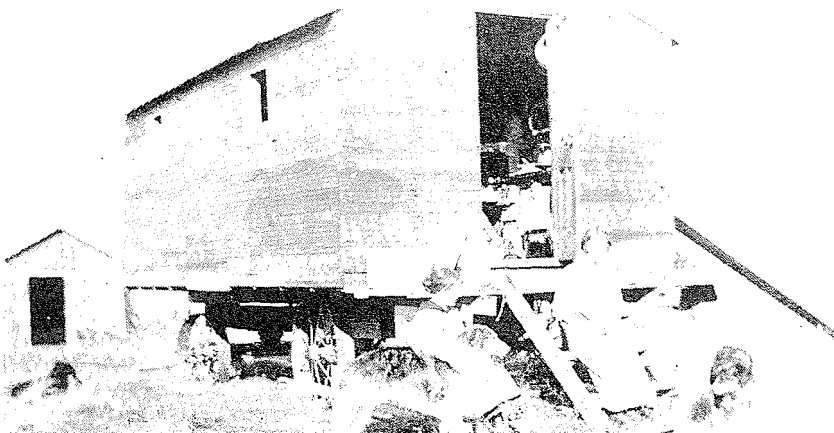
*Early binders, which beat working with the scythe, were drawn by three-horse teams. Notice the gunny sacking protection for the horses.*

to await the arrival of the travelling steam outfit-which was often as late as Christmas. As more threshing outfits were purchased in the district, the wait was not necessary and it became possible to thresh from stooks which were picked up by horse-drawn racks and pulled to the machine.



*The Speare-Tooke outfit with Ted Tooke on the steamer.*

The threshing crew reached its peak with the steam outfit-which employed as many as 35 men: spike pitchers, field pitchers, tank men, stokers (who had to build up a head of steam at 4 a.m.) teamsters, and grain haulers. There was no blower in the early days, so one or two men stood at the end of the carrier and pushed the straw away, which was relayed once or twice to the stack builder. The women had to feed this crew of men as ravenous as the threshing machine they operated. Cook cars were finally built to travel with the outfit. The men were housed in the caboose which contained bunk beds.



*The cook car on the Speare-Tooke outfit.*

Railroad excursions from Ontario brought young men to the harvest fields to assist with stooking and threshing. The train fare for harvest was approximately \$10 each way. Many blistered hands were earned by the time the return ticket was used! Many of these men who came as harvest helpers returned later as settlers. After the easterners ceased to be available for harvest, a succession of Englishmen from the cities arrived. Several were extremely "green", but learned quickly and also became land owners.

Water was often scarce. Wells were constructed where possible, often at great distance from the house. This necessitated hauling water in barrels upon a horse-drawn stone-boat. The horse man, or woman, must remember not to start with a jerk, as the hard-earned water would slop over the edge. Remember how a short piece of stick or cardboard floating on top seemed to control the slop of the water? Grace Fulton recalls that Joseph Holmes "carried water from the spring in the creek for drinking. Then in the winter he cut ice in the creek and melted it; the water was then much softer than in the summer."

There was no such thing as bar soap those days and if there had been, it would have been too expensive for most pioneer families. One of a mother's chores was to make soft soap. This was done by saving all the wood ashes for a year which were put into a leaking box with small holes on the bottom. Water was poured over these ashes and allowed to soak through into a very large kettle. This kettle was heated over a wood fire and animal fats were added. After a vigorous boil, it was cooled and ladled into wooden pails. The longer it was boiled, the harder was the soap.

Recipes were encouraged among the women folk.. Pioneer life encouraged stews and double crust pies were easier to transport. The introduction of baking powder in the latter part of the nineteenth century created the age of lavish cakes-no more of the solid, flat type which had been leavened with homemade yeast and eggs. Standardized measuring equipment was not introduced until the 1880's and not generally used until the 1900's, therefore, recipes read "a pinch of " and "a dash of ". A cup measurement might vary" from a breakfast coffee cup to a dainty tea cup.

The hands of the pioneer woman were never idle. If they were not occupied with cooking, sewing, washing and caring for the family, they were busy with quilting or hooking rugs. Vera Murray describes how her family "adorned the floors with 48-inch oval or rectangular rugs. Durable burlap patterns, choice wool from discarded suits and coats, brightly colored jersey from a factory in Hamilton or jute from grain sacks were hooked into serviceable rugs and often the finished product depicted some familiar Ontario scene."

Magazines carried directions for the making of hair pictures, the hand painting of china and the arranging of everlasting flowers under glass bell domes. Samplers with proverbs and maxims were evident in most homes, and girls learned the use of needle and thimble by sewing a fine seam, hemstitching, and cross-stitching "God Bless Our Happy Home."

Isolation, especially for the womenfolk, must have been as painful and depressing as a disease! Mail deliveries were sporadic in the early days. By 1882 a post office was established at Sourisford. The Butterfield post office was operated by the Andy Maitlands where Ross McNish and his family now live. Lyleton received its name from the post office established at Andrew Lyle's about 1892..



J. Henderson hauled mail from Sourisford about three years until the office was moved to the Robert Murray farm in 1900. Living up to the mailman's motto, Mr. Murray brought the mail from Pierson with the team and buggy until the railroad came through in 1903 when the post office moved to town where he remained as postmaster until 1957. He was assisted in the latter years by his daughter Anne who succeeded him as postmistress until 1958. Robert Lyle, her nephew, took over until his death in 1960. Myrtle McInnes had been helping Robert and carried on until Wilr Ball was appointed. Lyleton's postmistress today is Mrs. Laura Fenton.

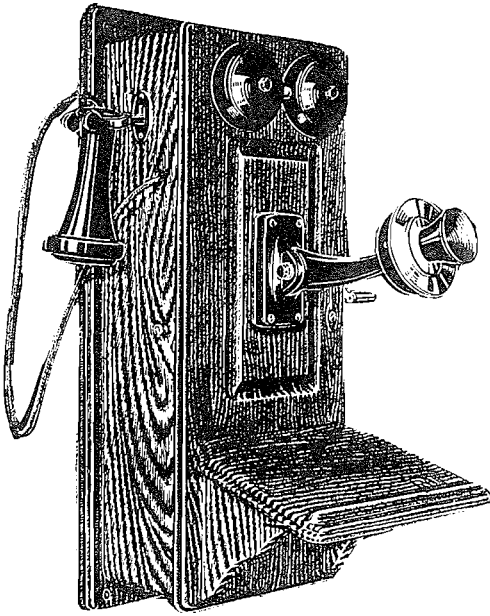
A library belonged to the post office and the complete sets of Dickens, volumes of Thackeray and Tennyson, and many classics made up the reading list. Each month a parcel of magazines was received from the Aberdeen Society. This society was begun by Lady Aberdeen when Lord Aberdeen was governor-general of Canada. She had found, when visiting the west, that farm life tended to be isolated. Her friends in Ottawa and England sent their used magazines which were then packed and mailed monthly by groups of dedicated women to a mailing list which catered to all ages.

The Family Herald was a paper familiar to most pioneer homes. The "Killarney Guide" in 1969 paid homage to this Canadian publication. "Another Canadian paper 'goes west', After 99 years of publication it has closed its presses as it cannot survive the rising costs. In earlier years it may be remembered that it often got its subscribers through the country weekly paper, a "clubbing" practice which is frowned upon today. It contributed in no small measure to the education of the people, young and old, in farm and town home, and furnished valuable information about eggs and vegetables and offered practical advice to farmers, housewives, market gardeners and the retailers alike."

Andrew Murray recalled that his father used to haul hay to the market square in Brantford. "On one occasion," recalled Andrew, "I remember that a man with trim black whiskers and a bur-r-r in his speech bought some of this hay. In the course of conversation Father learned that this was Mr. Bell who made and patented an apparatus called a telephone. He had placed one in the railway station at Brantford and another 10 miles away in Paris. Although men had carried on a conversation ever this contraption, he could get no support for his crazy invention. What a chance Brantford missed! If people had had enough faith, Brantford might have housed the first telephone factory."

The "Killarney Guide" in February, 1969 reported, "In 1878, only two years after Alexander Graham Bell obtained his first patent, the first two telephones were installed in Winnipeg by an enterprising telegrapher, Horce McDougall, and later additions brought the total to 26."

The Bell Telephone Company of Canada bought McDougall's telephones in 1881. In 1908 Manitoba's telephone facilities were purchased by the provincial government for \$3,300,000, making it a publicly-owned utility known as the Manitoba Government Telephones. The Melita-Arthur Telephone Co. was organized in 1904 and expanded to include Lyleton, Coulter and Westhope in 1906. Five phones were available for use in Lyleton at this time (telegraph services had been offered since 1903). The Melita Arthur Telephone Company was purchased by the Manitoba Government in 1911. The salary of the first chief operator totalled \$12 per month. Miss Jessie Little served on the Lyleton switchboard before becoming the chief operator at Deloraine.



*The telephone was the newspaper's twin for news and gossip. Rural party lines offered little privacy.*

County Court Division was established in Melita in 1893. Arthur municipality, named for Prince Arthur (a brother of the; late King Edward VII), was inaugurated in 1883. It comprised of townships 1, 2 and 3 in ranges 27, 28 and 29. Andrew Lyle served on the first Arthur Council.

In 1905 this original municipality was separated into three municipalities:

Arthur-I, 2, 3, 4 in ranges 26 and 27

Edward-I, 2, 3, 4 in range 29

Albert-5, 6 in ranges 26, 27, 28, 29

The first meeting of the newly formed Edward municipality was held January 2, 1960 with:

Reeve Joseph Henderson-nominated by Robert Murray and Charles E. Roblin.

Ward No. 1 - Charles Reid - Jos. Henderson, E.A. Gardiner

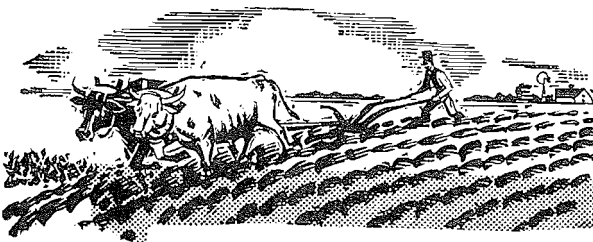
Ward No.2 - M.J. Basted - H. Mayes, A. McNish

Ward No.3 - Charles Roblin - S.G. Davis, E.L. Roblin

Ward No.4 - John Haight - R. McDermit, T.H. Fennell

Interest in civic affairs has always been evident in such people as A.M. Lyle, Murrays and the Cosgroves. John Arthur Ross served three years as councillor for Arthur municipality and seven years as the reeve. He was successful as Conservative candidate in the Arthur constituency from 1940 on. He was still serving as M.L.A. when death overtook him in 1958. Political activity is still very evident at election time!

Research in the homesteading files seems to reveal that the secret of successful homesteading may be written in a few words: "God helps those who help themselves and each other; and, in the face of all adversities, retain their faith."



## GROWTH OF THE CHURCH

These early settlers had experienced hard knocks in this wilderness, but they were people of faith: faith in the new land, faith in themselves, and faith in God. Some of that great loneliness may well have been lessened if they could have heard again the church bells of their homeland.

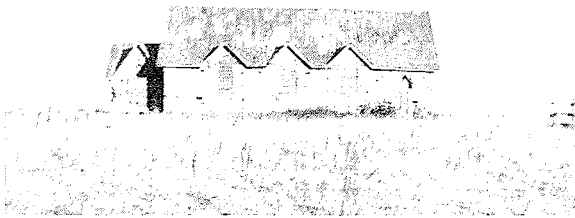
Upon arrival in this unsettled territory, they observed the Sabbath with family worship or hymn singing at the neighbors' where they experienced spiritual and physical fellowship for which they were starved. Hard on the heels of these brave settlers followed equally brave ministers of the gospel.

In July 1882 the first missionary student, of Methodist faith, paid a visit to the settlers and decided to hold services at Dr. Joseph Darin's on 36-1-29. Rev. Wheeler continued to conduct services there for the next two summers.

In these very early days of settlement, a Presbyterian missionary who went about the country holding worship and christening children was Mr. Gilchrist. He and his wife lived in a farmhouse owned by Howard McKennon and moved throughout the settled area with horse and buggy.

There was also Mr. Alex McCurdy who lived with his wife and son, Wesley, on a homestead near Coultervale. He preached at the school for two or more summers until they moved to Winnipeg in the late 1890's. (Wesley became the editor of the "Fress Press" upon the retirement of John Dafoe, but later joined the staff of the arch rival, "The Tribune").

The first Anglican service was held in the early 1880's by Reverend Cartwright who had been sent from Winnipeg. In 1892 a stone church, the first church of any denomination to be built west of the Souris River, was erected on



*The old English church in the Copley district which still reveals dedicated workmanship. Birds and little animals use it as their haven today.*

section 12-1-29 in the Copley district. The originator of this worthy undertaking was a Mr. Gale from London, England, who was staying with his nephews, the Gales. (One of these nephews was G.F. Gale who later became reeve of the municipality of Arthur). Mr. Gale appealed to his friends in London and to the Church of England Missionary Society for financial assistance. He described the isolation of these church people and the shortage of funds in this frontier community. His appeal was successful. Enough money was furnished to purchase the material for the building, and books, sacramental vessels, and linens were supplied by his friends. Some of these are now used in the Anglican Church at Pierson.

As soon as the funds were promised, the settlers began to haul the necessary stone, sand and gravel to the site and gave willingly of the labor. A splendid building was erected. The contractor made an excellent job of the stone work and the carpentry work was outstanding as is evidenced in the building today which could be made serviceable again with a small outlay for repairs. The first service was conducted by Rev. J. Boyne.

The English families who assisted at this time were the Speares, Thompsons, Gales, Bates, Charles Reids, Tom Peebles and the Saddlers from the Gainsboro district. Many of these settlers were not suited to prairie living and moved away. The church was neglected, the churchyard of few graves remained unfenced and became a haven for weeds and a pasture for cattle. The church even served as a granary until the congregations of Pierson and Melita made repeated and strenuous demands on the synod at Brandon to fence the grounds and to board up the windows.

In 1932 Rev. J.I. McKinney conducted a memorial service on the fortieth anniversary which was attended by some 300 people. M.J. Basted, reeve of Edward municipality, again took his place as organist and some of the original choir members took their seats in the choir loft for the service.

The pictures, organ and other serviceable items were moved to Eunola School. The church stands in its lonely state to remind every passerby that it served the community well at the beginning.

Mrs. Martha (Reekie) Cranston put to paper the details of two early Copley weddings;

"During the summer of 1889 two U.S.A. citizens living in the state of North Dakota near the Canadian border wished to be married by the Rev. John Brown who was homesteading in the North Antler area of Manitoba. Rev. Brown was not permitted to conduct a wedding ceremony in the States. So the prospective bridegroom purchased a Manitoba marriage licence.

One lovely afternoon he with his chosen lady and their bridal party stepped across the boundary line onto Manitoba soil in the Copley district, and while standing on the open prairies, Amelia Detlor and Clemance Seiffert were married by Rev. John Brown-the first wedding of the area.

Another unique wedding in the Copley district in June 1903 was that of Minnie Reekie, eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Philip Reekie, to Peter McKechnie.

The happy couple had decorated the living room of the Reekie log house with white wood violets, mauve lilacs and branches of flowering nanny-berries, but the sun shone for the bride and the marriage ceremony was performed by Rev. MacKay Omand in the Reekie garden by the blossoming crab-apple tree."

The Reverend Brown was the first ordained Presbyterian minister in the area in 1886. He homesteaded on the North Antler and administered to the spiritual needs of the area for five years. Then Mr. Gilchrist returned for another two years.

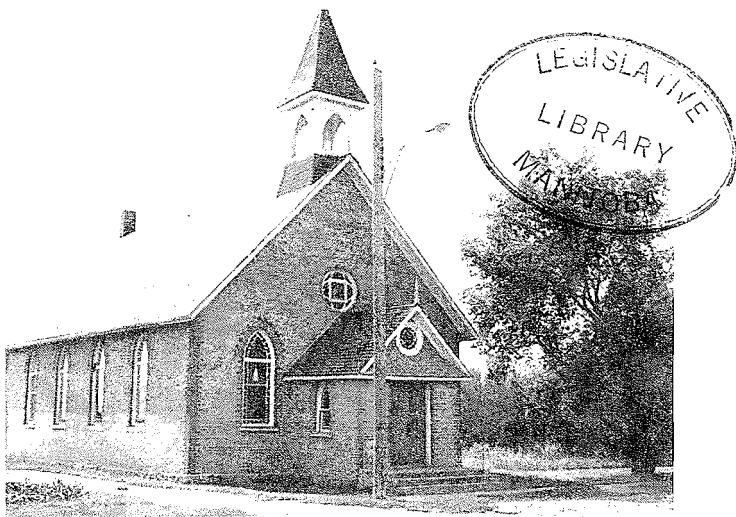
Miss Anne Murray checked all the church reports to produce this information. "In the early days of the Lyleton district church services were held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Lyle. From 1893 until the church was built, student ministers were sent out each year turn about from the Methodist College and the Presbyterian Field.

The first records to be found indicate that Lyleton was connected with Pierson, and comprising of North Antler and Coulter, was known as South Antler. In March, 1899 at a meeting of the Melita Presbytery, Elva, Coulter and Lyleton joined as a field and Rev. Omand was inducted in 1900.

A congregational meeting in 1902 with R.B. Ballantyne as secretary, passed a motion that Andrew Lyle, Edward Gardiner and Robert Murray were to confer with North Antler on the topic of "building a church".

On February 10 a joint meeting was held in Cheney's hall with John Harkness presiding. The assembled group voted unanimously that a church be built and a building committee of Andrew Lyle, Robert Murray, R.B. Ballantyne, A.E. Venton and J. Harkness was named.

Work on the church and manse began in the fall of 1903 with Cranston and Anderson named as contractors. The building was to be 30 x 50 of brick veneer surmounted by a belfry. The approximate cost of the church was \$3,000.00 and of the Manse \$2,000.00. Ted Line and his brother were stone masons who had recently arrived from England. Ted's first big project was laying the foundation and later plastering the Lyleton Church. He also designed the entrance. The furniture was bought in Dundas, Ontario.



*Lyleton United Church opened officially in 1904.*

Large brass kerosene lamps hung from the ceiling to light the interior. These were later replaced by stationary gasoline lamps and finally by electric lights.

The Rev. Omand with his wife and family were installed in the manse as soon as it was ready for occupancy. The official opening of the church took place on January 3, 1904 when Rev. Donald Munroe of Point Douglas Church,



*The beloved Rev. and Mrs. McKay Omand, the first minister in the Lyleton Presbyterian Church.*

Winnipeg, was the guest speaker. The beloved Mrs. Omand was the presiding organist. Members of that first choir as far as can be ascertained were: Mrs. J. Downey, Mrs. Charles Howard, Miss M. Linton (Mrs. Ray Speare), Mrs. M.A. Boyd, Mr. I. Cheney, Charles Dunning, S. Sadler, James Hyde, J.A. Scott, the Misses Amanda and Lena Walton, and one Miss Smith from Melita as the guest soloist. The first fowl supper was held the following evening in Hartry's Hall.

At the same time the Methodists purchased a lot and planned to build a church. They did erect a parsonage which in later years was used as a teacherage. The Methodists decided to rent the Presbyterian Church for the services under the direction of the first ordained minister to be sent to the field, Rev. D.C. Day.

In 1918 the Presbytery gave permission for the minister from Lyleton to conduct services at Coulter which had formerly been a Methodist charge. Later the members of the Presbytery met with the field to consider the advisability of union. In 1920 a form of union known as The Western Union took place and appointed Miss Loretta Shantz (Mrs. Andrew Gardiner) as secretary and William Johnson, CPR agent, as treasurer for the field. In 1925 union took place across Canada.

The church through the "dirty thirties" experienced difficult times. In 1939 with the harvesting of productive crops, the church was redecorated

inside by voluntary labor. The 25th anniversary was celebrated when Rev. C. Parker was minister and Rev. Omand returned as guest speaker for the service. The 50th anniversary was observed when Rev. F. Hubbard was minister and Rev. E. Parker was welcomed as guest speaker for the day. A dedication service was held when a plaque to honor the pioneers was presented by Robert Lyle. The pianist for many years was Miss Henrietta Murray who, as Mrs. Hill now serves as organist. The new organ was purchased in 1964. The pastoral message at the 50th anniversary service best summarizes the focus of the church;

“A great many things have transpired down through the years in Lyleton and our church fellowship since those humble beginnings in 1903, when the Presbyterian church was established here. There are many things which occurred during those days of which we have no record, such as the number of members, or when the building was dedicated, but we do have the names of many of the early pioneers that served this church. It is surprising how many of those early names are still with us in our fellowship through the activity of sons and daughters of those early pioneers.

In the year 1903, our church was built in the same place that it stands today. It has endured these past fifty years with very little repairs being needed, attesting to the stability of these early people. Of course the interior has seen many changes as in 1939, it was completely redecorated and rededicated. There was the change from gas lamps to electricity which came later. There has been the change again when the interior was painted and a new furnace added plus all the new material such as carpet and curtains which have been added during the past few weeks. We have seen also people come and go and have not really known the contribution this institution has made to their lives. How many people have entered those doors and shared in the service of worship during the past fifty years? We have many reasons to be proud of our church and its work. We have many reasons to thank God for his blessing upon this fellowship since those early days.”

The list of former ministers will recall many spiritual messages and assistance over the years:

Rev. MacKay Omand	1903 - 1911
Rev. W.T. Beatty	1911 - 1915
Rev. G.A. Dyker	1915 - 1920
Rev. C. Austin	1920 - 1924
Rev. J.e. Parker	1924 - 1930
Rev. A. Smith.....	1930 - 1937
Rev. H. Johnson	1937 - 1940
Rev. S.H. Brenton	1940 - 1943
Rev. T. Head	1943 - 1946
Rev. A. Barber	1946 - 1948
Charge vacant during 1948-1949 - served by	
Dr. B.W. Allison and Rev. W.D. Bayley	
Rev. Roy Wilson	1949 - 1951
Rev. Fred Hubbard	1951 - 1960
Mr. John Hussey	1961 - 1962
Rev. Roger Lowe	1962 - 1969 .

The 60th Anniversary was held in 1962 when John Hussey served as a student minister and Rev. Roger Lowe was introduced following his appoint-

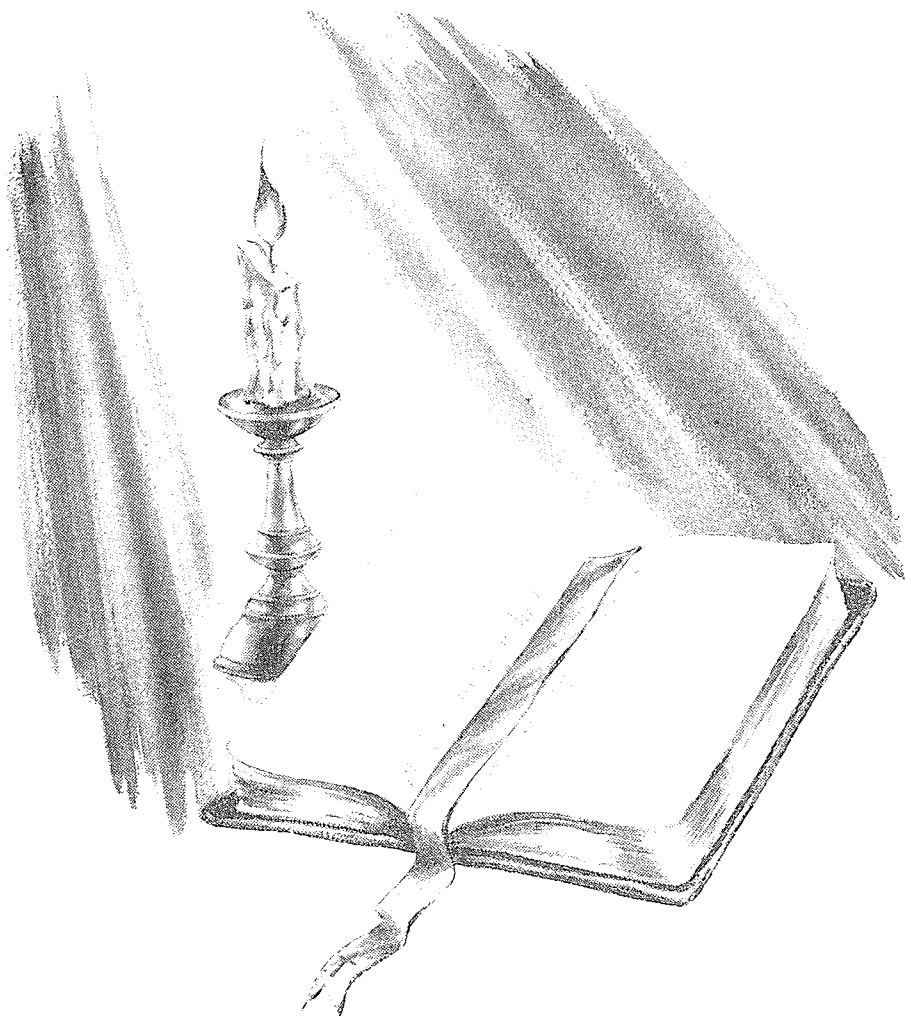
ment to the charge. The theme of the service was that "the pioneers built well and sacrificially. Let us live worthily of the spiritual heritage which is ours."

Through days of depression and prosperity, faithful members have kept the doors open to receive babies for baptism, couples for marriage, and the loved ones for burial. Many who have gone to their reward departed from the home church and received burial in the peaceful Lyleton cemetery. Many beloved ministers, too, have gone to higher service or departed to larger centres where they will continue in the service of the Master."

The Commemoration of the Faithful Departed offered on June 1965 serves well to summarize this section on the church history,

"We praise thee for the generation of men and women, who, forgetting what was behind and reaching out for what lay ahead, kept faith and are now entered into thy rest. Grant that we who continue their labors may run with perseverance the race that is set before us.

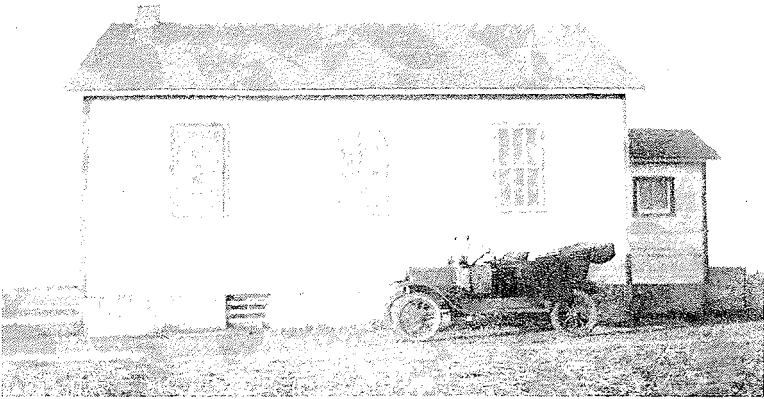
Amen."



*"Grieving at the Past"*



## TEPS TOWARD EDUCATION



*North Antler School, the typical rectangular white schoolhouse with a porch entrance. The picture was taken in February of 1924.*

Until the establishment of the first school, children learned to read with their mothers' assistance from treasured volumes from the homeland which were thumbed with use and smudged with sticky fingers. The burning desire for a church and a school was responsible for both of these buildings being erected in the new-settled area.

Lloyd Speare was able to locate the following record of Copely School. "The first school was started in 1895 with Jennie Beveridge as teacher and averaged about 24 pupils. The teacher's salary was \$240.00 for seven months, from April 1 or the first Monday to Christmas holidays with two weeks holiday at the end of July. The fuel was wood, cut and split ready for the stove at \$3.00 per cord. The school was painted for \$35.00 by Henry Armshon. Isaac Wilson was paid \$2.00 for digging the well. The desks cost \$4.70 - \$5.50 each and the freight from Winnipeg on each desk was 82 cents. The trustees were Philip and Abraham Reekie with Henry Speare as secretary-treasurer whose salary was \$5.00. By 1898 the teacher's salary had climbed to \$420.00." School janitors, if they could be procured, received \$2.00 a month.

Since the first settlers to come into the Lyleton district in 1882 were young men or young married couples, there was no need for a school for several years. A Mrs. Duncan, who homesteaded S.W. 10-1-29 in 1885, had four small children. She taught these girls at home from 1886 - 1889 and soon had the neighbors' children too. Among her pupils were Minnie, Isabel and John Reekie and the Sieffert family. At times she had as many as eleven pupils.

When the Robert Murray family came from Ontario in 1890, the oldest boy, Andrew went to South Antler School, which was located about two

miles west of what is now Coulter. The school was taught by a Miss Bride who lived close by with her brother on his homestead. (She later became Mrs. William Sherritt and they moved to Pierson where they started a furniture store.)

The school district of Lyleton was formed in 1893. The first building was erected on the southwest corner of S.E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of 15-1-28 on land donated by A.M. Lyle where the cemetery now is. The first trustees were: Robert Murray, as chairman, E.R. Baynes as secretary-treasurer, and Robert Tyler.

The school opened with Ralph Robbins as teacher who had a Third Class certificate. A.C. Heaney, supervisor of research at the Department of Education, stated that "the Third Class examinations for a teaching certificate at that level were written by those students who had achieved Grade X standing in Secondary School Program. Those entering Normal School with Grade XI standing would receive a Second Class certificate and the Grade XII's would receive a First Class certificate." After three months of Normal School training, the teacher could not teach in town until the second year at which time a permanent certificate was received. The first teachers' convention of the area was held in 1894 in Virden.

Prior to 1896 the "Program of Studies" was a few lines on the back of the register. On March 8, 1896 the first program was published and mentioned text books such as First Reader, but did not specify the publisher. This Program of Studies gave the cities and towns permission to establish another grade, known as grade IX, but left it optional. The first Entrance Examinations were written in the last week of June in 1908 and offered exams in the usual versions of the 3 R's plus elementary agriculture, grammaire francaise, litterature francaise, and style epistolaire. Also three hour examinations were available for teachers of First, Second, Third and Commercial Classes. The questions provoked thought for 15 - 17-year-olds. "Were you to take hold of the skin of a frog's back with the thumb and forefinger, what information would you obtain?" Or for five marks, "Why does a hen look at us first with one eye and then the other? How does a hen drink and why in this manner?"

Prior to 1888 a clergyman or other prominent citizen was asked by the Provincial Superintendents to visit nearby schools and were remunerated \$5.00 per visit. Inspector A.S. Rose inspected schools south of Brandon from 1890 to 1905 as did Inspector Sidney Lang who was known as the author of Lang's Grammar.

The school was always a summer school and was also used as a social centre and for church services. The "Lyleton Herald" of December 1903 reported, "Lyleton school house was crowded on Wednesday night on the occasion of the concert given by the pupils. The program was long and varied, not one poor piece, the children acquitting themselves remarkably well and reflecting much credit upon their teacher, Miss Atkinson. Rev. McKay Ormand acted as chairman. Snider's orchestra and Mr. Lyle's gramophone also contributed to the evening's entertainment. A collection amounting to \$10.65 was taken up which is to be used for the purchase of books of reference for the use of the school."

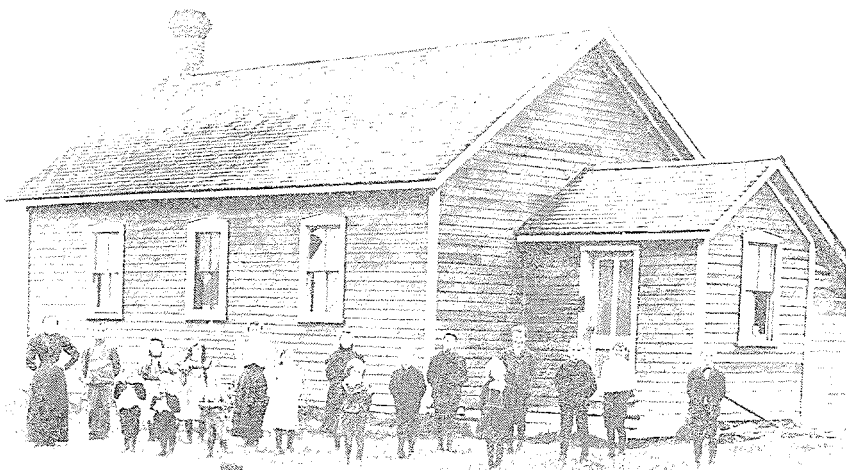
School games included "Anti-hi-over" with a yarn ball, sometimes covered with canvas, made and repaired by the mothers. Mr. Jackson introduced a type of cricket game without wickets and some of the rules later crept

## LVLETON SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 731

Formed January 4, 1893.

Merged to become part of Edward Municipal School  
District No. 2353 effective January 1, 1956.

YEAR	TERM	Number of		Days Open	GRANT	TEACHER	CERTIFICATE
		Boys	Girls				
1893	Fall	5	8	88	\$65.00	Ralph Robbins	3rd
1894	Spring	14	8	45	27.40	E.L. Jackson	3rd
	Fall	14	10	99	63.08	E.J. Jackson	3rd
1895	Spring	13	6	62	39.50	J.F. Morrison	3rd
	Fall	12	6	88	56.07	J.F. Morrison	3rd
1896	Spring	7	6	62	37.30	C.A. Murray	3rd
	Fall	7	7	112	69.80	C.A. Murray	3rd
1897	Spring	7	9	51	30.00	Bertha Kellar	3rd
	Fall	9	10	98	63.70	Bertha Kellar, then F. Morrison	3rd 3rd
1898	Spring	11	11	53	34.45	Bertha Kellar	3rd
	Fall	11	13	88	58.50	Bertha Kellar	3rd
1899	Spring	11	13	120	78.00	Luella Munroe	2nd
	Fall	7	10	91	52.00	Luella Munroe	2nd
1900	Spring	18	14	99	66.30	Minnie Walker, then P.W. Winthrope	3rd 3rd
	Fall	11	12	100	63.70	P.W. Winthrope	3rd
1901	Spring	14	10	71	44.65	Jessie J. Furtney (?)	?
	Fall	15	11	85	55.57	Jessie J. Furtney	?
1902)	Register has been lost.						
1903)							
1904)							
1905	Spring	5	10	18	10.20	Margaret King	2nd
	Fall	22	18	108	70.20	Margaret King	2nd
1906	Spring	25	23	118	75.20	Margaret King	2nd
	Fall	18	18	87	53.30	Margaret King	2nd
1907	Spring	22	21	111	70.65	Margaret King	2nd
	Fall	22	22	89	57.85	Margaret King	2nd
1908	Spring	24	22	108	68.70	Laura E. Mace	Interim
	Fall	23	11	87	56.55	Laura E. Mace	Interim
1909	Spring	23	17	117	74.55	John B. Stewart	2nd
	Fall	17	13	89	53.95	Mayme McFetridge	2nd



*The white School, built in 1893.*

*Left to Right-*

*Back row: Miss Kellar (teacher), Sampson Green, Edna Henderson, Jean Murray; Loie Murray, Pearl Featherstone, Baird Murray, Dick Murray, Dwight wilson, John Wilson, Will Seator, Jim Seator.*

*Front row: will Murray, Cecil Murray, Harry Lyle, Ethel Murray, Anne Murray, Belle Seator.*

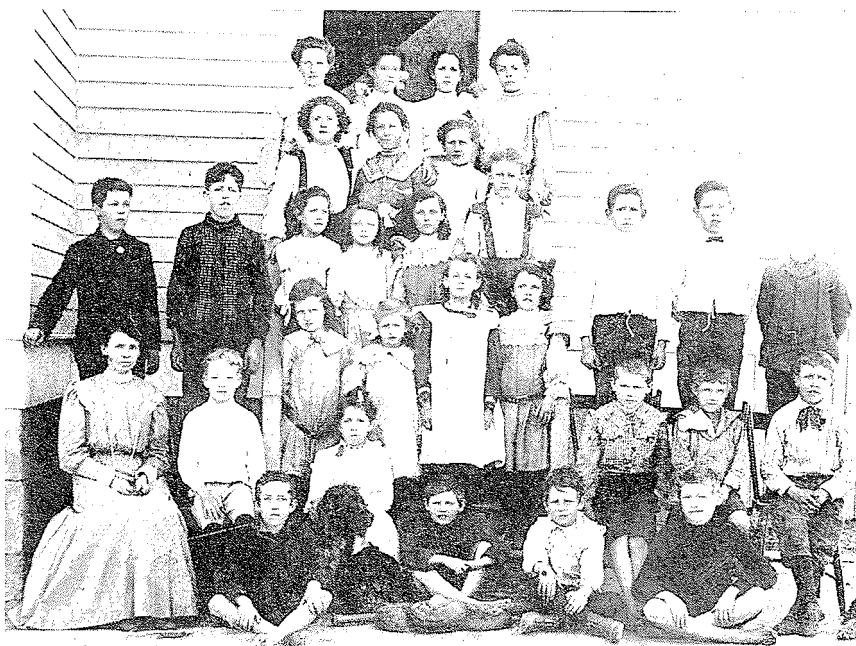
into shinny games. Some of the children rode to school huddled on a stone-boat or on a hide (the tanned hide of a cow with a whiffletree attached) pulled by a horse. If they slipped off the flat hide, the horse went on without them.

Roxy Cosgrove who taught in the White School, as it was later known, recalled that, "I boarded at George White's as Gordon and Harvey were starting to school and the Whites wanted me to drive the old grey mare and two-wheeled cart. We always tethered the horse out at noon. One day the mare fell into the barnyard well hung with front legs on the ledge. It seems that a horse cannot remain in that position long before death takes over." She also disclosed that the old Sweet Pea Reader, as authorized by the Department of Education, was useless as it introduced eight to ten new words in every lesson. With a chuckle she revealed that she brought it out of cold storage only when the inspector paid his annual visit.

The school had served the earlier generation well even though the first classes had to be held in the sad stable while the building was completed. The

stable was equipped with benches and the door was left open to let in the light and the blackboard leaned against the west wall. But the town sprang up after the completion of the railroad in 1902, and a new school district known as Lyleton No. 731 was formed in 1905. The south portion of the old Lyleton district became known as the White school district. The trustees for this new district were Robert Murray, Chairman; A. Boyd, secretary-treasurer; and J. Wilson. The first board of the White school district consisted of Walter Murray, Chairman, J.H. Miller, A.M. Lyle, and W.D. White, secretary-treasurer.

The new two-roomed school was built in 1905 by Archie Randell and Pete McKay. Miss M. King was the first teacher. Only one room was used until 1911, although the IOOF Lodge used the one room for meetings. School was held in the old hall from 1903 to 1905 with Mr. Mundel as teacher. The big boys, who had to work on the farm, attended this school in the winter time.



*Lyleton's first school in 1905.*

*Left to right-*

*Back row: Hatty wilson, Anne Murray, Jean Omand, Jessie Little.*

*Second row: Alice Lyle, Gertrude Gardiner, Ada Peebles, Gladys Murray.*

*Third row: Fred Lyle, Billy Graham, Rajl10Jw Murray, Gertrude Hunt, Lou white.*

*Cecil Murray, Billy Murray, Andy Murray,*

*Fourth row: Miss King, Clarence Hopwood, Adelaide Collis, Henrietta Murray, Isabelle Murray, May white, Cliff Wilson, Etrick white, Harry Lyle.*

*Front row: Roy White, Ruth Omand and her dog, Bobby Thompson, Andrew Gardiner, Fred wilson.*

# LYLETON SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 731 (Continued)

YEAR	TERM	Number of		Days	GRANT	TEACHER	CERTIFICATE
		Boys	Girls	Open			
1910	Spring	24	25	118	75.20	Mayme McFetridge	2nd
	Fall	19	20	79	51.35	Earle A. Ross	2nd
1911	Spring	18	22	117	74.80	Earle A. Ross	2nd
	Fall	19	23	77	51.35	Victor W. Jenkins	1st

Consolidated with White School District No. 1326 effective August 1, 1912.

1912	Spring	13	10	118	75.45	Victor W. Jenkins	1st
		17	21	120	78.00	Roxy Bride	3rd
	Fall	14	12	77	50.05	Louise C. Anderson	2nd
		15	21	77	50.05	Minnie L. MacKenzie	3rd
1913	Spring	17	13	123	?	Louise C. Anderson	2nd
		21	22	123	?	Minnie L. MacKenzie	3rd
	Fall	13	18	87	?	James Henderson	2nd
		16	17	87	?	Laura Davidson	2nd
1914	Spring	12	16	113	72.20	James Henderson	2nd
		24	17	113	73.45	Laura Davidson	2nd
	Fall	21	15	86	55.90	Laura Davidson	2nd
		10	16	86	55.90	J. Henderson	2nd
1915	Spring	10	15	114	70.85	U.R. Moore, then	1st
						John Houston	1st
	Fall	21	15	114	74.10	Laura Davidson	2nd
		13	15	88	55.90	John Houston	3rd
1916	Spring	19	14	88	55.90	Irene Melhuish	3rd
		11	14	110	68.25	John Houston	1st
	Fall	22	17	110	71.50	Irene Melhuish	3rd
		18	15	85	65.25	Frank S. Cockbill	1st
1917	Spring	20	13	85	65.25	Isabella J. Rendall	2nd
		17	13	114	86.25	Frank S. Cockbill	1st
	Fall	17	12	114	86.25	Isabella J. Rendall	2nd
		15	18	84	63.75	Frank S. Cockbill	1st
1918	Spring	14	10	84	63.75	Dorothy Cornell	?
		17	20	113	84.75	Isabella M. Melvin	2nd
	Fall	20	10	113	84.75	Dorothy Cornell	2nd
		16	18	56	59.25	Jean Brown	2nd
1919	Spring	16	8	56	59.25	Edith McKenzie	2nd
		19	16	110	90.75	Jean Brown	2nd
	Fall	28	14	110	90.75	Edith McKenzie	2nd
		22	17	77	59.25	James Henderson	2nd
1920	Spring	22	13	82	59.25	L. F. Rogers	2nd
		12	7	122	90.75	James Henderson	2nd
	Fall	20	13	117	90.00	Martha M. Reekie	3rd
		20	13	115	90.00	Lula F. Rogers	2nd
		10	11	87	59.25	R.E. Mayes	2nd
		16	11	87	60.00	Grace E. Dandy	3rd
		19	8	82	60.00	Lula F. Rogers	2nd

The White School continued until 1912 when the district united with Lyleton to form a consolidated school district under George White, chairman; LP. Cheney, secretary-treasurer; Frank Clark, S.M. Lyle and T. Brewster.



*LYLETON SCHOOL- The two-storey portion was built ill 1905 and the high school room was added in 1920. This school was demolished in 1967.*

In 1920 a high school room, built by Jack Pitt on the west side of the Lyleton School, was opened. Mr. Henderson, who had been here before the war, returned with his bride to be the first high school teacher. As the room wasn't ready for occupancy until after Christmas, Mr. Henderson held classes in the lower room of the old hall. (In 1930 the school board purchased the former Methodist parsonage for a teacherage.)

A new two-room fully modern school was built on the northeast corner of the school property. Classes were enrolled there in September, 1965 under Mrs. Boulton, primary teacher, and Mr. Emerson, intermediate teacher. The Grades 9 - 12 are picked up by bus to attend high school in Pierson or Melita. The old school has been sold and torn down but the school bell has been saved by the Lyleton W.r. who hope to have it mounted somewhere in town to preserve it. We wonder if one Hallowe'en night was experienced in which it was not turned upside down in the belfry!

Mention must be made of one of Lyleton's teachers, Ralph Mayes, who first taught at Lyleton in 1920. In 1924 he married Jean Muriel Lyle of the district. Throughout his forty years in the teaching profession, he strove to inspire in his students high ideals of scholarship and personal conduct. One of his greatest pleasures was to have taught all four of his children, two sons and two daughters, who all became teachers.

In this day of education taxes, a record on school rates of 1909 revealed the mill rate: Lyleton-14.3, Copley-2.8, and North Antler-5.4 mills. The success of Lyleton students in many fields of endeavors since 1893 proves it has been money well spent.

## GROWTH OF THE HAMLET

Business opportunities could be considered in the newly-settled area with the extension of the C.P.R. west from Deloraine. The 17.02 miles of track were laid from Deloraine to Waskada in 1899 and many petitions were made to the Greenway government for another 20 miles of rail to Lyleton. The "Melita Enterprise" in 1903 disclosed that "because of the engineering difficulties in the crossing of the Souris River, the government had decided to aid the C.P.R. to the extent of \$35,000 in building the railway from Waskada to Lyleton. This amounts to \$1750 per mile. The distance of 37 miles from Deloraine to Lyleton cost the government \$65,000 which was called 'secret pledge' carried out by the Roblin government."

The Montreal archivist assured us that the railroad reached Lyleton in 1903. According to pioneers in Lyleton, the railroad came to Lyleton in the fall of 1902. The only explanation we have for this difference in dates is that the railroad in 1902 lacked a portion of a mile of contracted mileage. Another three-quarters of a mile was graded (but never used), which would account for the grant being given for service in 1903. According to the schedule as re-printed, the service offered six trains a week. An item in the "Melita Enterprise" in June, 1903 warned track walkers to be on the lookout for trains.

The same issue stated "Lyleton is booming and several buildings are in the course of erection or completion. The new hotel, costing about \$6,000, is almost finished and will prove a boon to the travelling public as well as to some of the lonely bachelors around town. The foundation of the new Presbyterian church has been laid and we understand that it is the intention of the congregation to build a manse too. The ratepayers of the district have decided to erect a new schoolhouse in the town. A comfortable station has been provided by the C.P.R. and is under the management of Mr. Barnes. When the post office is located in town, the area shall be blessed with many of the conveniences of modern civilization." This semi-weekly mail service to Lyleton went into effect in July, 1903.

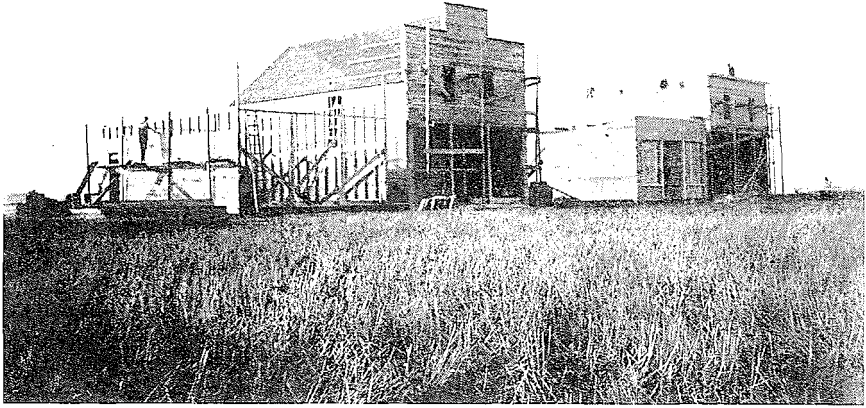
The growth of the town was set down for the records in the first issue of the "Lyleton Herald" published by H.T. McPhillips on October 30, 1903 at the subscription rate of \$1.00 per year in advance.

The first issue carried this headline and write-up:

### LYLETON UP-TO-DATE

Following the usual custom in launching the first issue of a newspaper in a new town, in this, the initial number of "The Lyleton Herald", we will endeavor to give a history of Lyleton from its commencement up to the present time.





*The first buildings in Lyleton in an oat field. This photo was taken in the fall of 1902. These buildings were later burned down. The picture was taken by Minnie Reekie. Her camera had glass plates and she developed her own picture.*

The village of Lyleton is situated at the western terminus of the Deloraine Branch of the C.P.R., in the municipality of Arthur, in the extreme southwest of Manitoba, four miles from the international boundary, and on the NW¼ of sec. 21, twp. 1, range 28; on land purchased from Mrs. Cole by Mr. Allen Thompson, the owner of the townsite.

It is a little over a year since the first building was commenced in Lyleton, the livery barn of Charles Edgar, since destroyed by fire and replaced, the lumber for which was hauled from the lumber yard of Mr. Dandy, Pierson. It was located just east of the hotel erected last spring by David Cockrell on the southeast corner of Railway and Souris streets, but which was burned a short time after it was opened, together with Edgar's livery barn. Within a few days after the commencement of the livery barn, a number of other buildings had been under way, but so closely did they follow one another that it is impossible to state the exact order in which they were commenced. Among those were M.A. Boyd's hardware store, the Lyleton Drug Store, erected by Hartry Bros. & Co., Alex. McRae's store on the southwest corner of Railway and Souris Streets, the building of Cheney Bros., hardware merchants, and the building erected by Walter Wilson, and occupied by him as a store until the latter part of the past winter when it was purchased by Hartry Bros. & Co., and is now occupied by them. These, with the Deering CO.'s warehouse, are all located on the west side of Souris Street, between Railway and Thompson Streets. Ranged along the south of Railway Street, eastward from Edgar's livery barn, is the residence of Richard Harris, butcher; the Lyleton Pool Room and Barber Shop, of which Ed Milward is the proprietor; John Dunn's hotel, the Massey-Harris warehouse and post office, Howard James' harness shop, Cuthbert & Harris' butcher shop and Creighton's blacksmith shop, while at the west end of the street is the office and warehouse of S.A. Sadler, lumber merchant. These, together with the Farmer's Truesdale, and Ogilvie elevators and Hunt's Paint Shop on Thompson Street, comprise the business places in the village, unless we in-

elude the boarding houses of Mrs. McCracken and Mrs. Hunt and the dressmaking rooms of the Misses Carlson and Bigford, over Hartry Bros. store, and Miss Gilanders, over that of Alex McRae. Scattered throughout the townsite are the Hartry residence, the residence of Charles Edgar and the Presbyterian manse and church, together with a number of small buildings, which, with the buildings already mentioned, and the new hotel under construction just opposite the Lyleton Drug Store, on Souris Street, constitute the village of Lyleton at present.

Summing up, Lyleton has: A post office, depot and round house, three elevators (the combined storage capacity of which is about 90,000 bushels,) two large general stores, two hardware stores, a drug store, harness shop, meat market, blacksmith shop, two lumber yards, two coal dealers, livery stable, pool room and barber shop, one hotel, two boarding houses, a paint shop, three dressmakers, three contractors, a doctor, Presbyterian church, and a public hall over Hartry Bros. & Co.'s store, where all religious denominations hold service.

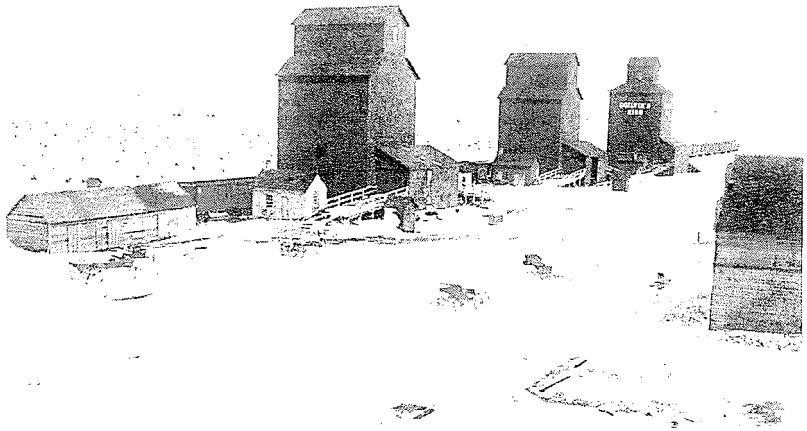
Situated at the terminus of the Deloraine branch of the C.P.R., in the centre of as fine a country as ever the sun shone on, there is no room for doubting that Lyleton will grow to be a place of commercial importance. Its citizens are men of enterprise who have grasped its possibilities, and who are determined to do their part to build up the village. It has the advantage also of being located on rising ground, so that cellars are dry at all times of the year. To the south, along the Antler River, and eastward to Coulter and the Souris River, lies a country it would be hard to surpass in natural beauty. It abounds in natural groves and parks, particularly along the Antler."

This first edition also described the three elevators. "The Farmer's capacity 30,000 bushels, of which J.H. Riddell is agent; the Truesdale, capacity 25,000 bushels, of which John Inkster is agent, and the Ogilvie, capacity 36,000 bushels, of which William Munsey is agent, succeeding Frank Aikins of Melita, who was the first agent."

These agents were called buyers as they did just that. They bought the bags of grain directly from the farmer without benefit of scales or dockage regulation. The farmers were expected to bag two bushels of grain to each bag. The farmer could reject an offer and go to the next elevator, which he did.

Early elevators were often horse-powered. One cylinder gas engines were introduced around the turn of the century. These engines provided eight to fifteen horsepower. The weigh-scales could accommodate loads up to five tons. These scales tipped sideways in order to dump the loads of grain from the wagons into the pit. Box cars had a capacity of approximately 1,000 bushels and it took two to three hours to load one as the engines were not powerful enough to elevate the grain rapidly. Almost all elevators were engaged in some sideline business. Many kinds of goods were handled in bulk, including coal, flour, apples, twine, fenceposts, wire, and farm machinery.

The title owners of the Farmers' Elevator were A.M. Lyle, George T. White, A.E. Venton with Robert Murray as managing director. The real owners were James Richardson & Sons who provided the five thousand dollars, the contractors, and the money for its operation.



*Lyleton Railway Avenue - Taken September 12, 1903, a day after the blizzard. Notice the stooks, the weigh-scales near the democrat, a dog in front of Charlie Edgar's livery stable, and the tie post in front of Young's bakery.*

Shortage of grain cars from 1905 - 1908 caused each train to be met with expectation which turned to black despair. J.S. Cosgrove recalls farmers running down the track to meet it with a shovelful of grain which if aimed correctly, could claim space in a box car. Some farmers met the train at Cameron in order to claim space upon arrival in Lyleton.

Mr. McPhillips had prophesied a great future for the town of Lyleton but he had been unable to foresee that fire would strike and strike again at this growing hamlet.

The "Melita Enterprise" carried the following account in August 19, 1904. "The entire business portion of Lyleton was wiped out by fire, caused by lightning. It struck M.A. Boyd's hardware store and ignited coal oil. Although rain was falling in torrents at the time, the fire spread rapidly and in a few minutes, had reached the general store on one side and Cheney Bros.' store on the other, spreading from these to Hartry Bros. store. Then, taking a backward course, the fire burned into Sadler's lumber yard, doing damage to the amount of \$2,000.00. James Murray's warehouse was saved. The total loss is \$40,000 with about \$15,000 insurance coverage."

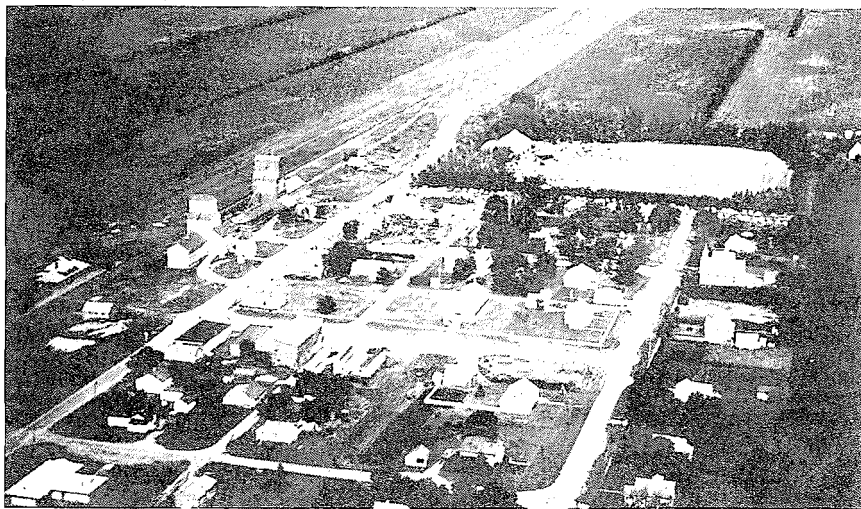
The telephone system was extended into Lyleton in 1906 and a branch of the Home Bank opened there in December, 1908. The community survived the fire and Lyleton continued to prosper. \$1.00 wheat had become a reality! The average yield in 1909 was 15 to 16 bushels per acre and most samples graded No.1 Northern. Little towns like Lyleton owed their existence to the homesteads around them. This community proved to be set in the midst of a

rich grain-growing part of the prairies. Mrs. Roxy Cosgrove recalls that "most farm wives came to town for a few purchases and often found in the storekeeper's wife a confidante. Alone, often without the companionship of other women for weeks on end, they unburdened their troubles. Anxious-eyed young mothers often brought in their babies suffering from the swift illnesses of infancy and often the storekeeper's wife learned to recognize the simpler symptoms. Most customers had accounts rendered under the old Copley-Chatterton system in a ledger weighing 10 pounds."

Horses were such a valuable farm commodity that much care and attention was given to keeping them sharp-shod. The town blacksmith, by using forge and anvil, made the shoe to fit the foot. The forge was heated by coal which were fanned red-hot by pumping bellows. These bellows were operated with the left hand while the tongs were handled in the right hand. The secret of success was to know when the temperature of the metal was "just right".

Fire was to strike Lyleton again; the stark headline "Lyleton Fire Swept" was evidence of the shock. The article in the August 28 edition of 1910 continued, "Lyleton was visited on Sunday morning by a most serious conflagration. The fire, which broke out shortly before 4 o'clock, wiped out a large portion of the business section of town. The blaze had made big headway before it was discovered and the citizens, handicapped by the lack of fire-fighting equipment, could do very little to check its progress. The buildings destroyed were: harness shop of John Sharp, livery barn of Charles Edgar, post office of R. Murray, bakery of Thomas Lawrence, butcher shop of Tom Brown, and the branch of the Home Bank."

The improvement in transportation and communication had brought large towns of Melita and Brandon closer. The original need of a thriving town was no longer so evident. The store, school, church elevators, post office, garages and lumber yard continue to serve the village which became an unofficial town in 1938. Much of the community life continues to revolve around the church, school, hall and rink.



*Aerial view of Lyleton July 1, 1966. The sports day crowd can be seen in the park. The tree strips show up in their pattern and the new school can be seen in the left hand bottom corner.*

## ARLY COMMUNITY LIFE

Much has been written about the everyday life of the pioneers. In this era of space travel and moon landings, many younger readers find it difficult to appreciate life in the "old days". Several people were able to recall events of the early days. A daughter of the beloved Reverend and Mrs. Omand recalled for us her childhood days in Lyleton.

### MEMORIES OF A MINISTER'S DAUGHTER

- Ruth Omand McCusher

Father (Reverend Omand) had been raised in St. James, Winnipeg. Their old farmhouse, barn and milk house were located on the Assiniboine River near a railroad bridge. In later years he was so pleased to learn that the city had developed the area into a park and had called it Omand Park centred on Omand Creek.

Father used to tell us about their fear of the Indians who came to their homes and took tea and sugar from the cupboard. These Indians were always decorated with war paint and feathers and sometimes with scalps hanging from their belts. He used to recall going to the pasture for the cows one night and being terrified by shrieking and yelling. From the safety of the thick bush he then watched a battle between two Indian tribes. Many dead were left behind. School was called off next day as the school teacher worked with the men of the community to bury those corpses. His parents kept an axe and gun by their bed every night but were never harmed.

My earliest recollections of Lyleton included living on a farm while the church and manse were being completed. I remember that there was a sad barn there which was roofed with poles and straw.

A soloist was once brought from Winnipeg (perhaps it was for the opening of the church) and was what they called in those days, "a fine figure of a woman". She brought an upright piano with her which Father bought to replace Grandma Colder's old oblong-styled grand piano which was about 60 years old and had been tuned so many times that the strings had lost their resiliency.

Mother arranged for a piano teacher, a Mr. Henry who lived in a small town somewhere down the line, to come to Lyleton to give music lessons at the manse. Imagine Mother's consternation to learn that he was a heavy drinker! Father and Mother had to plan their strategy. If a child was late for a lesson, Mother would make tea and involve Mr. Henry in conversation or I would hitch up the horse and take him for a buggy ride. As the horse was skittish, Mr. Henry was forced to hang onto the buggy seat in fear. I do not remember how long he stayed. The Dominion Conservatory music exams were held in the Presbyterian Church. His pupils did well in these exams as he was very patient

and a perfectionist with music.

I can also remember the care given to driving horses at this time. Father thought horses should be underfed with a little rib showing. With the oats he used to mix molasses and "Dan Patch" stock food (that was sold in wooden pails). After a long drive in the summer, the front legs of the horses were bound in heavy woollen bandages which had been soaking in a wooden tub of cold water. Sometimes mud and water were mixed in shallow tubs and the blanketed horses were made to stand in these until they cooled down.

A neighbor of ours, Mr. Hall, lived on the outskirts of Lyleton to the east of us. Our cow used to break loose from her tether and go through the fence into Mr. Hall's oat field. We would, of course, get her out as soon as she was discovered but Mr. Hall must have had the patience of Job to put up with the damage. One Sunday morning in the middle of Father's service, a neighbor whispered to us that our cow was in Hall's oats. We got her cornered close to the doors of the church basement. The entrance to the open doorway was a clay slope. The cow rushed down this slope and into the church basement, and started to bawl, as terrified cows will. Thanks heavens the congregation was singing a lively hymn accompanied by the organ. However, when the last "Amen" was sung, the young fellows of the congregation hearing the shuffling came to our or. the cow's rescue.

Mr. and Mrs. Holmes lived to the east of the manse. Mrs. Holmes was so kind and generous. I can remember her bringing us cookies and cakes and she grew such lovely flowers in her front yard. Mr. Hall and Mr. Holmes used to meet at our pump for drinking water every day. They were both deaf and used to yell at one another about the prices in Lyleton stores, the cheapness of goods in Eaton's and Simpsons' catalogues, and the "highway robbery" of storekeepers. Everyone in town, including the said storekeepers, could hear them.

The town school wasn't built when we came to live in Lyleton and all the children went to the school east of town. We were often driven back and forth but we did enjoy walking. Most of the time after a rain we would walk barefooted carrying our shoes and stockings. Talk about stockings-they were the heavy one and one rib cotton which we wore all summer long as it was not considered decent for girls to go without stockings, even in hot weather. The heavy boots laced up over this. No wonder we enjoyed the mud and water on our bare feet! The horse and buggy marks left ruts which held the water and mud. I think there were five or six ruts in nearly every road with lovely grass growing between the ruts.

There was great excitement one noon hour at school. Upon hearing bellowing, we rushed out in time to see a big red bull go into the sod barn among the children's horses. We scrambled onto the pole and straw roof of the barn and used two handy poles to prod the bull out of the barn. What confusion when the barn roof caved in and there we were among horses and the bull! It's a wonder some of us weren't hurt.

I saw my first automobile from the windows of that school house. In response to a strange noise on the road, we clambered to the windows for a better look (in fact, one of the boys put his head right through the window pane.) What a contraption!

It looked just like a buggy without a horse. What a racket! Two men sat bolt upright in beige-colored caps and coats with huge gauntlets. When we got back to Lyleton after school, this horseless carriage was still there taking people for rides. I guess we children looked so intrigued that they drove us to Mr. Hall's yard and back. We seemed to travel at a terrific speed, "15 miles per hour", the driver said. This invention was as scary to me as a child as was the first telephone hook-up with Melita.

We had a lot of church "socials" and many of them were held in the manse. The women of the congregation used to outdo themselves with wonderful cakes. I can still see the tall chocolate and cocoanut cakes with fancy icing. We could hardly wait till the entertainment portion was over so we could get down to the business of eating. I remember one night Mother introduced charades (acting out words). Our group was chosen to act out "Presbyterian", Anne Murray was to be "teary" and pretend to cry while the rest of us were to press passed her. The other side was quite unable to guess "Press-by-teary-Anne".

The church picnics usually held at North Antler or South Antler were wonderful and anticipated for weeks ahead. What disappointment if it rained! The women brought enough food to feed an army. Huge ice cream freezers were brought along with thick country cream, bananas, nuts, ice and coarse salt. The young men had the chore of pulverizing the ice in bran sacks with the flat of the axe and then turning the mixture in the freezer until it became too stiff to stir. That was when the children crowded around to lick off the dashers as they were taken out. The ice cream was then left to ripen for a few hours in the shade of the trees. All afternoon we drank real lemonade which had been made in a wooden barrel. I don't think I ever saw so many lemon skins in one pile anywhere else.

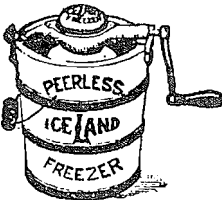
It was during one of these picnics that a wicked-looking storm rolled in from the west. Because we remembered a near-eyelone which had ripped through Lyleton

with terrific winds, and hail when the roofs of the skating rink and livery barn had been blown off, the women took refuge in the house while the men and boys went to the barn. The darkness rolled around us and hail pelted down breaking house windows. Some women held up or nailed up quilts to keep out the hail and rain. When it began to subside, we could see buggies piled up in a fence corner. On the way home we saw that every blade of wheat had been pounded into the ground and a cloudburst had left water and floating hailstones rushing from fence top to fence top on the road allowances.

One funny incident took place at one of the Manse socials. The babies were asleep upstairs and in those days were robed alike in heavy grey woollen shawls. One couple left with their sleeping babe, only to return in half an hour as they had discovered their mistake when they got home and undressed the infant-it wasn't theirs!

I recall Mr. Harkness, who lived on the South Antler and who late in life had married a Scottish woman of beautiful complexion and lovely clothes.

D509. Peerless Ivu-land Iro-Cream Freezer. The most convenient and best for family use, will make the best of cream with little trouble in about 3 minutes, our motion, hard wood scrapers, no cogs on top of can to get



5493

out of order or to allow suit to get into the cream, easy to keep clean, metal parts are rust proof, every freezer warranted to give the best of satisfaction, 1 quart size 1.50, 2 qt. 2.00, 3 qt. 2.50, 4 qt. 2.95, 6 qt. 3.75, 8 qt. 4.75, 10 qt. 6.50, 12 qt. 7.75.

She owned a pack of greyhounds which caused my one and only run-away when they bounded out from the ditch one day. I also remember visiting the Hopwoods and going to look at the mink traps with Clarence. My stomach remembers the fresh raspberry pie with pastry strips across the top which Mrs. Hopwood served piled high with whipped cream.

We used to visit at the Robert Murray farm often and I still recall the plan of the house. It seems to me that the big red barn to the east of the house was full of Clydesdale horses and we used to be allowed to ride them back to the barn (with harness on) after work. Talk about the Russians splits; those backs were so wide!

We always seemed to get into mischief out at the Murray farm. I remember a half-grown steer in the pasture that Anne, Cecil and I decided to harness to a wide-seated, two-wheeled cart. Talk about John Gilpen's ride as told in our reader; we didn't have any lines or curbs on that steer. The pasture, like most unworked land at that time, was full of buffalo wallows. We hung on for dear life and arrived back at the pasture gate where we were met by Mr. Murray himself. I don't recall that the reception was friendly!

Walter Murray's farm was to the east of there. I spent much time there with Isabelle. They had a wood pile stacked up like a tent and a pet crow which fascinated me. If I remember correctly, Mrs. Murray lost thimbles, rings, beads, etc., which were later found in the woodpile where the crow had hidden all his treasures.

I remember that Mrs. Reekie would invite us out to pick raspberries from a huge patch in which the raspberry rows were a distance apart and the soil between them was kept well cultivated. We used to paddle in the creek there and used to see fish in some of the deep pools which were shaded by the willows which hung over the creek. Two of the Reekie boys used sticks of dynamite to drive out these fish to us who were waiting where the creek narrowed. All we caught in our nets were chips of wood from a stump which the dynamite had blown to bits.

Mother and I visited Cheney's one night to watch them make sauerkraut. They shredded cabbages which they put into a barrel with some salt and then pounded this down with a mallet. They filled the barrel layer upon layer and left it to ferment at room temperature. Mrs. Cheney's mother was a dear old soul from Minnesota of German extraction who always wore a shawl over her head and long blue skirts gathered at the waist.

Mrs. Aim Lyle used to tease Aim about running for parliament and being defeated. One day a Miss Cookson, who lived with her brother in the centre of town, walked out to the "little house behind the big house" or the "parliament" as it was called. Aim Lyle had a team of horses hitched to a wagon downtown and as usual, they were a flighty team. When something startled them that day, they ran away. "The little house behind the big house" was demolished and Miss Cookson disappeared into the chasm below. Mrs. Aim Lyle, on hearing about it, commented, "Aim has been running for parliament for a long time and he's finally made it."

Another time Aim Lyle and my brother Billy had a run away. I can still see Billy, as white as a sheet, hanging onto the side of the buggy. The horses turned south in front of the store, and, galloping "full-tilt", put the





*PARLJAMENT!*

horse's head and shafts through the store window, across from the hotel.

Father used to do sitting-up exercises morning and night. One night the lamp chimneys rattled as did the dishes in the cupboard. When Father was accused of shaking the house, he denied doing any exercises at the time. The rest of the townspeople had experienced the same tremor but the cause was not known until the station agent came to the store to report that he had just received, over the wires, a report that San Francisco had experienced a bad earthquake.

My memories of actually leaving Lyleton are vague. Father had had a heart attack one Sunday evening in church and had tumbled off the pulpit platform. We decided, for several family reasons, to move to Regina where Father obtained a government position as a censor of moving pictures. I know I was of the age when the "City" meant excitement to me which probably overshadowed the Lyleton farewells."

The reminiscences of a child's view of Lyleton community contained woven threads of friendship and unity, faith and fellowship, fun and food. Gertrude Hill was reminded of many events which Mrs. Christie Chalmers often related. Her account begins with a humble tribute to the courage and fortitude of these early settlers.

What courage and fortitude they possessed, as they became pioneers on widely scattered farms! There were no telephones, no cars, no roads, except prairie trails, very limited finances, and few opportunities for shopping even if they had the money. Luckily, happiness did not depend on dollars and cents. The friendships developed in the hearts of these hardy ancestors of ours were deep and abiding. What a heritage they have passed on to us!

Such reminiscing recalls the amusing introduction of Mrs. Chalmers as a newly-arrived bride. Church services were held in North Antler School, conducted on alternate Sundays by the Methodist and Presbyterian ministers, living in Pierson and Elva. Due to the miles covered by horse and cart, the hours of service at North Antler were 2 o'clock on Presbyterian Sunday, and 3 o'clock on Methodist. It was the same loyal congregation, but the HOUR was more important than which denomination was represented in the pulpit. (That is using the word "pulpit" loosely, as it was teacher's desk all week.)

Christie brought his lovely Jean to what he thought was the Methodist Sunday. She was a bit flustered as she waited while he unhitched and stabled their Dobbyn, and they found the minister announcing a hymn. The desks were well filled so they had to go to the very front row. We can only imagine the importance of their entrance-a new bride and groom to be new friends and neighbors in North Antler. Also, imagine their embarrassment when the minister immediately announced the benediction. This was the Presbyterian Sunday!

Most highly treasured pieces of writing are our little Mother's daily diaries, beginning on February 14, 1901, with the three words, "We were married." Later-"went west"-and from then on, the names are familiar to North Antler; Frank Boyle, Walter Holmes, Ali Venton, Had Holmes, Charlie Ruskin, the Lee family, and many others.

Mother had a lovely old reed organ, and could play by ear, any familiar music. So the early social life of that corner of North Antler centred around the only organ in the area at that time. Most future farms were being homesteaded by bachelors, who lived lonely lives, and appreciated the homey atmosphere associated with music and singing. Could this be the origination of today's "hootennannies"? It certainly was homespun music, filling an aching void.

Mother soon found herself baking bread for these bachelors, and then churning butter. These hardy souls would walk as far as six miles on an early summer Saturday evening, bring a bundle of clean clothes, and meet at the old swimming hole. They would have their Saturday night bath, put on clean clothes, and head for the white frame house, lie on the grass and rest, then sing their loneliness away. If it was extremely hot, those strong lads would carry the organ outside for their sing-song. Baking 20 loaves of bread, in a morning and afternoon effort, had a very warming influence on a small house, with a "Happy Thought" coal and wood stove functioning full blast.

Mother's records show these loaves of bread, which would make two of the loaves we buy today, were sold at four loaves for 25 cents. A very special rate for one bachelor who got his bread in the middle of the week, was \$1.50 for baking up a whole 100-pound sack of flour. Imagine that! Butter varied in price, from 12 to 15 cents a pound, and eggs were 10 cents a dozen.

Meals were served to threshing crews of various bachelors at 25 cents a meal; a milk pail of saskatoons picked and delivered to W.S. Kenner's store in Pierson for 75 cents. Wheat was the fabulous price of 46 cents a bushel in 1901, and two loads on November 8 are heavily underlined at 50 cents. Grocery purchases are listed in detail, and include lamp-wick (05 cents), regular purchases of coal oil, soft coal, lamp glasses, stove blackening, butter-color, and so many articles which have been obsolete for years now.

Amusing incidents were not uncommon, as these bachelor friends struggled against discomfort and discouragement. One such story began with a span of oxen which were stubborn and determined beasts. Four of them, hitched to a breaking plow, would decide it was time for a "coffee break" and head for a nearby slough where the water was refreshingly wet. Nothing could stop them, nor persuade them they had had enough. So the would-be driver took off his clothes and went in after them. He couldn't turn them around, so went on through to the other side, and drove them around the slough, aiming for the pile of clothes he had discarded. As he saw a buggy, bearing two large hats and two light dresses coming along the prairie trail at a fast trot, he made a hasty decision, and went back into the slough without the oxen and plow. He was never just sure who those ladies were, and hoped they were not aware of his identity either. They were!

North Antler School was long the focal point in the community. The pupils who came and went through that weather-beaten door are widely scattered now, and the families of those pupils are making their various contributions in various areas of the world. We, who went to school before the term, "teen-ager" had been invented, and baby sitters hadn't yet become a necessary way of life, must have been a hardy lot. The social life of the community developed as the neighborhood became more thickly settled, and the families were growing up. Babies were bundled up in shawls and slept en route to a concert or party, and were piled on mounds of overcoats like cordwood, to sleep while their parents enjoyed a social hour, or three or four. No one had to punch a time clock in the morning.

The annual Christmas tree was a big function of the winter season, with a real tree, imported from the north, gay with home-made decorations, and many home-made gifts for young and old. Eaton's catalogues got a very thorough study during the weeks before Christmas, and were a vital part of life on the prairie before they came to their final destination, hanging on a nail, you know where?

The Christmas program was a real test of ingenuity and perseverance on the part of the teacher, and endurance on behalf of the audience. This was budding artistic talent, from the youngster's viewpoint. Of course, we were all nipped in the bud, and rightly so. There are no North Antler stars twinkling in Hollywood, are there?

A few weird events within that building stir memories of long-gone days. How many can remember the time a skunk found a broken cellar window, and invaded the school, finding a comfortable resting place in the organ? This was during Ralph Mayes' term of teaching, and meant an enforced school holiday, and an outdoor church service. Can any reader remember the wild high-jinks that were enacted during Mr. Roberts' term of office, and the most unusual events while Mr. Bannerman presided? Fantastic!

The regular church services and Sunday School hours were laying a groundwork of basic training which can never be evaluated. The very fine congregational singing was outstanding, according to visiting clergy. This was greatly enhanced when the back benches were filled with young men. One recollection is outstanding, of Ruby Elgar playing the organ for a song-service, when there were so many new (or fresh?) young Englishmen there. Among them were Billy, Barney and Art Robinson, Fred Hill, Fred Copperwheat and more whose names are not so familiar. "All Hail The Power of Jesus' Name" as sung in North Antler School that Sunday must surely have been a little foretaste of heaven. Mr. George Fennell, from the bottom of his heart said, "Hallelujah! Let's do that one again." We did.

Looking back, with nostalgia, to life as it was lived in North Antler community, makes us realize how the fellowship we enjoyed, and took for granted, made us feel like a large family. When tragedy came and it did it affected everyone deeply. We were dependent on each other for human companionship, and were all concerned for all our neighbors' welfare. When war was declared in 1914, each recruit from North Antler was one of OURS-the sock showers were for OUR boys, the anxiety over their welfare was shared by all the parents. It proved what closely-knit neighborliness had developed through the years. When, on November 11, 1918, the Armistice was signed, everyone rejoiced together, and in a few hours, mourned together when phone calls told everyone of the death of Mrs. Mel Mayes, nee Lucy Barrows, mother of five little children. So life went on, through the years.

A winter blizzard could mean a real threat to the safety of the community children in that little white school. Several times the hospitality of the Boyle home was stretched to capacity, as they took us all in for the night, till the storm subsided and made it possible for the "Dads" to break new roads and come for us. Truly, the Boyle home was "A shelter in a time of a storm", and Mrs. Boyle's supplies of groceries would get an awful jolt. She was so helpful in so many emergencies at North Antler School.

There were surely some well-educated horses in the district, as they trotted off to school five days a week. The pet of the motley assortment was Emily Horsley's little PUNCH, a pint-sized little pee-wee pony, with a mind of its own. After he got Emily educated, he was Ruth Forman's mode of transportation till he retired. The modern school bus method could surely never have the individual characteristic experiences which were a vital part of our education. Just getting there and home again safely was educating, wasn't it?

Much more detailed accounts of events occurring through the years could be recalled, but time will not permit. If this were compiled like a recipe, the readers will be aware that one ingredient left out was the shortening. Sorry, but it has been fun, anyway."

Such an account leaves one wishing that more had been disclosed about the fresh (?) Englishmen and the high-jinks during some of the school terms. Perhaps it is better that it be left to imagination!

W.R. Cosgrove obligingly put on paper his memories of Lyleton where he served as a druggist. His account explained the drug business and the changes in regulations during the years since 1906. The friendly atmosphere of the

community and the role of the druggist in time of sickness are best revealed by Mr. Cosgrove's own words.

"I graduated from Pharmacy in Winnipeg and worked in a drug store for a month or two before I decided to go into business for myself. I went to my father's farm four miles east of Lyleton where my brothers had several driving horses and buggies. From this family supply I was able to borrow an outfit with which I went to Lyleton and bought the small drug store stock from Dr. J.A. Perrin.

A good place to board was Mrs. Thomas Hall's who farmed at the edge of town. I had been used to paying \$17.00 a month for meals in Winnipeg, which may have been adequate for some people, but not for active young people. We went twice a week to a restaurant for a "plant steak" which cost 35 cents. What a contrast was the Hall's table! It was laden with homemade bread, cakes, pies, vegetables fresh from the garden, meat, fowl, milk, cream and butter. The cost for this spread was the same as the sparse city meals! Among those receiving such attention and kindness were Dr. Perrin, Jim Stacey and Tom Hubie (grain buyers), a music teacher, Wes House (the C.P.R. agent), Mr. Boyd and myself.

As I remember, Lyleton was a growing delightful place, filled with optimism and the joy of life. To a young man who was keen on sports and who had been cooped up with studies for months, the baseball, curling, the shooting season on deer, ducks, prairie chickens and grouse in bluffs southwest of town was a dream come true. What a wonderful experience! Unfortunately for me, the area couldn't support a drug store or I would probably be there still!

Perhaps I should record a summary of my experience in the drug business and cite some of the changes. When I was a small boy I remember being given laudanum for severe pain and having to gargle with potassium permanganate—both nauseating, but effective. Laudanum (tincture of opium) was sold in one-ounce bottles over the counter for 25 cents and was a family remedy for many pains, diarrhea, toothache, etc.

Opium was freely shipped from China to all parts of the world in the generation prior to the druggists I served with. In fact, I remember shortly after registering that I assisted my praecceptor make laudanum and it was a sickening job. I never could understand how it could become a drug habit! It came in a pound of black, gooey, sticky mass with an overwhelmingly sweetish smell, covered with poppy leaves to make it packable. It cost \$4.00 a pound and could be bought freely by the drug trade. The druggist made tincture by the maceration filtration process, the resulting potency being effective but often variable. Today this and various other drugs go through a scientific analysis to determine the quantity of heroin, morphine and codeine and in the breakdown of these chemicals, isolates the active ingredients that are effective and reactive. It is this intensive research that makes new and more effective drugs expensive. Shortly after I started in the drug business, international laws were passed to control the sale of habit-forming drugs and the regulations have become more restrictive with the passage of years.

During the earlier years of my experience in the drug business, over-the-counter articles consisted of animal drugs such as colic remedies, epsom salts, Glauber salts, saltpetre, sweet nitre, aconite, blistering ointments, hoof and foot

and sore shoulder remedies, patent medicines (some of which are still good sellers: Castoria, Scotts Emulsion, Cod Liver Oil, Dodds and gin pills, and Chases medicines), surgical dressings, and iodine. Most early druggists stuck closely to drug stocks and stationery lines. Sometimes the prescription business consisted of a doctor's extensive order for drugs and chemicals which required careful dispensing and checking for correct dosage or incompatibilities. The cost of a three-ounce mixture averaged 35 cents and eight ounces averaged 65 to 75 cents. All ointments were made by hand on slab with spatula or mortar and pestle. Filling prescriptions was an interesting job requiring skill and a knowledge of procedure.

In my first experience we purchased supplies from the Martin Bole Wynne, Drug Wholesale which merged and is known as The National Drug and Chemical Co. Most of the drugs shipped to the rural druggist consisted of heavy drugs-saltpetre, salts, gentian, iron sulphate, copper sulphate, etc., and required good containers. New fresh wood barrels were replaced by heavier woods well nailed and later by wire-bound wood boxes. As wood became scarce, cardboard replaced the barrels. Today's packing is a work of art with heavy reinforced cardboard sealed with tough plastic tape and mailed with a lithographed address. Wholesale drug houses are now equipped with automated loaders and unloaders, orders are still filled by employees, but a collecting vehicle speeds up diversified orders.

The first order I sent as a druggist in Lyleton in 1906 requested a rush delivery. I received the invoice for \$35.00 in four days but no request to remit prompt payment. In ten days time I wired about my order. A year later I learned that the first order had been shipped to Lytton, British Columbia. The second order arrived in a new stove barrel packed with clean straw. A barrel full of drugs! A druggist today could take \$35.00 worth of drugs home in his vest pocket, if he had a vest pocket.

The early druggist was expected to answer all calls and he did. I found the customer wanted his prescription made up promptly as they do today, but I found that I could lock up during the afternoon for a couple of hours and the public was quite considerate.

When epidemics struck, everyone stayed on the job. I well recollect the flu epidemic; my wife and children were in bed with the flu. I locked the store and left a note telling any callers to come to the next door in the same building. Many a prescription I filled during that anxious time and often told the person picking it up, "You'd better go home and go to bed; you have the flu." Our doctor did not go to bed for days-he and I were lucky in not contacting the virus.

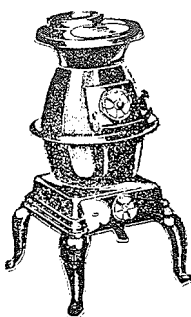
Another frightening epidemic was encephalomalites in horses during which time hundreds of fine horses died. Some people contracted the disease-some died, a few became mental, a small number recovered. This disease continued to flare up until Lederle Chemists developed antibiotics which were produced from hatching eggs. The germ was injected into a partially formed chick embryo (through the shell with a fine needle). After timely gestation, the chick was dried and ground up; and this was then filtered. The remedy made from this proved completely effective and eliminated all fear of this dread disease.

In private enterprise, some survived, some didn't. Credit was extended to a degree. Large items, such as farm machinery, were sold on lien notes and, in some cases, with chattel mortgages as security with interest at eight to twelve per cent.

Merchants usually extended credit to customers until the crops were harvested. In the drug business I had to pay cash for my supplies; but I considered everyone honest and extended credit to the limit of my finance. I lost not more than ten per cent during my lifetime in business. In fact, it was like a renewal of faith to have former customers drive miles to offer to pay a bill that I had written off years before.

In those early days people depended on one another in adversities such as crop failure, sickness or disaster. It was that spirit of neighborliness that founded and built this country."

A small store in a community was an excellent place to do community service. The people came to the storekeeper with troubles, for credit, for praise, and for encouragement. The government and politics of the country were discussed and often decided over the cracker barrel and bulk cheese display around the pot-bellied stove.



Andrew Murray arrived in Lyleton at the age of *nine* and in his memoirs he helped us to relive the community activities from 1890 to 1909. With regard to local politics, he remembered that, "In those days if a child was born either Tory or Grit, he had to stay that way for the rest of his life, just the same as being born male or female. I am sure if blood transfusions had been used then the plasma bottles would have been labelled Tory or Grit, or they could not have been used."

He also described the first skating rink. "For a few years in the '90's, we had a small sheet of ice in the bush just across the Antler Creek from A.M. Lyle's barn. It was fenced on all sides with page wire except for a six-foot hole in each end for goals and all was banked with snow. We played shinny when there were no girls on the ice. A few men played too without skates. We had no written rules and used some football ideas. Our shinny sticks were made from the bent end of broken buggy shafts or from willow branches. Either a boot heel or a round piece of wood sawed from a broken neck yoke or whippletree served as a puck. The skates were usually rusty blades which were clamped onto our every-day boots and held in place by straps which crossed over our toes and around our heels. Tube skates that screwed onto boots did not appear until the 1900's." Younger children often rode down the banks of the creek on a scoop shovel, on a piece of bark, or any large lid..

In early days the children ran barefooted all summer. I rather "looked down" on children who were forced to wear shoes. I rather liked wild flowers, beginning with the early crocus which became Manitoba's floral emblem, then the buttercups in low-flying areas, violets in the shady woods, wild roses on the road allowances and in the bluffs, and the tiger lilies in the sloughs in late June. The cemetery was in the school yard where sometimes the children would pick flowers to decorate the graves. (Mrs. Harmer, Sr. was the

first person buried there followed by a 15-year-old niece of Mrs. Andy Lyle, Bertha Reese).

Another famous outing was the annual picnic held in the Lyle picnic park where a race track and a cook house were located. Every year the men built shelters and covered them with fresh branches of green trees. For a week before the big event, Jennie Bowlby and Mina Harmer, and possibly other young misses, were hired to go to the picnic site to cook and bake cakes, pies, cookies, breads and buns. On Sports Day the meals were served for the magnificent price of 25 cents per meal. There was always a refreshment stand selling lemonade, candies, oranges and plums. (This, of course, was before the age of ice cream cones and soft drinks). Jean (Murray) Bourne remembers, "We all treasured any little bit of money we could scrounge. We tried any races for our age group and were 'tickled pink' if we won the large sum of 25 cents or even 10 cents if we were only second. Father's race horse 'Avic' was the fastest race horse around." Yes, that was the forerunner of the famous first of July Sportsday which the fourth generation participate in and keep up the tradition.

The "Melita Enterprise" in 1909 carried the following list of winners for the Sportsday at Lyleton July 1:

Races: Boys under 10	- Ted Murray D. McNish C. Riddell
Girls under 10	- H. Murray I. Murray L. Riddell
Ladies' free-for-all	- L. Reekie G. Murray
Potato race	- L. Cheney G. Webb R. Howard
Ladies' walking race	- I. Murray Mrs. G. Seeley
Standing long jump	- R. Murray W. Murray
100-yard race	- A. McRae R. Murray
Tug-of-war	- Lyleton vs. all comers. Won by Lyleton

In 1899 the Pioneer Picnic was introduced at Sourisford and served as a reunion for old friends and the picnic site is preserved for the picnickers of today.

The winter, although severe, was shortened by card parties and many pie socials. The "Melita Enterprise" revealed that, "A social gathering of residents of Pierson, Lyleton, Coulter and vicinity was held at the North Antler



schoolhouse in November, 1895. The revellers sang songs, told jokes, revived old scenes, and presented Mr. and Mrs. McCurdy each with a fur coat and cap plus a purse. It lasted until even the Thompsons' threshing gang was satisfied."

Just how late these social events lasted may be testified to by Andrew Murray's memory of an event which he had experienced while he was attending school and boarding at Seifferts. "At the double wedding of Jenny and Ella Seiffert to Jim and Dune Schell, who were brothers of Mrs. Sam Seiffert, the community gathered for the wedding dance at which Jim Hide called the square dances. The house was full and since the dancing went on till early morning, many people slept there. I had been sent to bed early, and awoke in the morning to find two women in bed beside me. Some event for a ten-year-old boy to remember!"

Many accounts of social events mentioned oyster feeds. Barrels of oysters were shipped thousands of miles inland after 1870. Cookbooks carried dozens of recipes and many suggested one quart of oysters to every three persons present.

Isolation and severe conditions did not negate an interest in clothes, fashions and personal hygiene. The catalogues, Eaton's and Simpsons', were important features of any home and offered fashion to the whole family (Eaton's established the Winnipeg house in 1905 while Simpsons' had been offering mail order shopping since 1896).

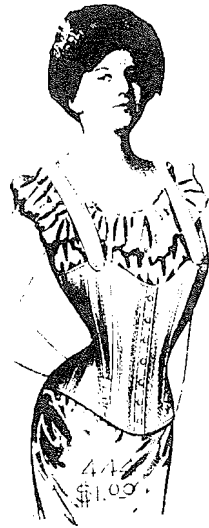


Mustaches were common and all men who were old enough nursed along some stray whiskers into eye-catching, and soup-catching, mustaches and side burns. The male outfit of the late 1890's consisted of a black suit, a starched shirt with a high collar, and a tie about the size of a man's hand with straps which hooked behind the neck. The pants were ankle-length and foot-noted with button shoes. The hair was parted in the middle and worn long, but plastered down with Vaseline or patented hair creams.

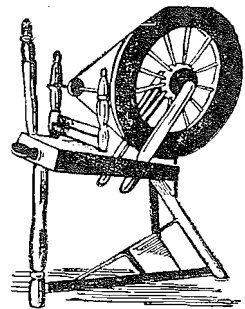
Ladies were expected to display a creamy white complexion. Fruit and vegetable waters were used as lotions while glycerins and rosewater were highly recommended for soft hands. Sun tanning could be avoided by the use of lemon juice and buttermilk. However, if this concoction was inadvertently upset, the only item to experience bleaching was the dressing table. (It, of course, along with all other furniture, was protected by scarves and doilies; the sofas and chairs were protected from soiling by the men's Macassar oil by the use of anti-macassar which were works of art in intricate designs.) •

Women's dresses accented the womanly shape which was achieved by use of corsets with wide steel rebbing. The medical profession and churchmen thundered against the use of these garments as physically damaging and sinful respectively.

1762. Misses' Suit, all-wool cheviot, in brown, navy, green and black, jacket lined with satin, trimmed with tulle, braid and tinsel soutache, bust measurements 32, 34 and 36; length of skirts, 34 to 38 7.50



Since the tendency was to gather together for song and dance, it would seem natural to introduce organizations for pleasure and for assistance to those less fortunate.



## RGANIZATIONS

The early pioneers were kept busy with building homes and turning the land to their use. The womenfolk raised the children, offered them schooling and religion, processed most of the food, and made the family's clothing. The young lads in the 1880's had become young men by 1895 which explains the advertisement in the Melita newspaper announcing the Bachelor Ball and later the Quadrille Club which attracted some of the "gay blades" from Lyleton. After the town of Lyleton came in to being, the community organized to help other people.

### LYLETON UNITED CHURCH WOMAN'S GROUP

- *By Anne Murray*

Soon after the opening of the Presbyterian church in Lyleton, a Ladies' Aid was formed with Mrs. Andrew Maitland as the first president.

This organization carried on successfully for several years. The first fowl supper was held early in 1904 following the official opening of the church. The practice continues and the proceeds are used for repairs, redecoration and furnishing the manse and for the provision of fuel and other necessities for the upkeep of the church.

In 1930 the name was changed at a reorganizational meeting known as the Women's Association. The first table officers included Mrs. R. Kett, president, Mrs. Laura Murray, secretary, and Mrs. A.W. Reekie, treasurer.

In March of 1913, a W.M.S. was organized with the aid of Mrs. Beveridge of Melita who assisted in the formation of the society. Officers included Mrs. Robert Murray, president; Miss Ethel Murray, secretary; and Mrs. R. Dougall, treasurer. Money was raised for missionary purposes and studies were made of our missionaries and the countries in which they served.

In 1950 under the direction of Mrs. (Rev.) R. Wilson, the W.M.S. and the W.A. were amalgamated and became known as the Women's Association with Mrs. A.M. Gardiner, president; Mrs. Sara Murray, secretary; and Mrs. R.W. Scott, treasurer. Later, the duties of president were handled jointly by Mrs. L.N. Murray and Mrs. Helen White. Each meeting consisted of a mission study followed by the business portion.

On January 14 of 1962 a new organization was formed known as the United Church Women. The dedication service was conducted by John Hussey, a student minister on the charge at that time. His address was entitled "Launch Out into the Deep". The Junior Choir rendered the anthem, "Hear Us, O Lord, as the Servants Meet."

This organization continues to fulfil the duties and to maintain the upkeep of the church and manse in a commendable manner.

## LYLETON LODGE, rOOF No. 56

*By Cecil Murray*

The Lodge was instituted in White's Hall in Lyleton on November 20, 1906 with 22 members present. The following officers were installed: Noble Grand-R.A. Laing; Vice-Grand-vOscar Riley; Secretary-M.A. Boyd; Treasurer-George R. White; Financial Secretary-J.B. Cosgrove.

The first night, Initiation, put on the first and second Degrees and had the installation of officers concluding at 5:30 a.m.

On December 5, 1906 the first meeting was held in the Lodge Room which was the upstairs room of the school house. (This building was a two-storey, but only the ground storey was used for school purposes). The first meetings had been held on Wednesday nights but it was decided that meetings should be held regularly on Thursday nights thereafter.

The Lodge moved back to White's Hall in 1912 and in November, 1915 this organization bought the building at a tax sale. In 1916 they partitioned off part of the lower floor and rented it to the Manitoba Telephone Company, which continued to use it until the dial telephones were installed in the district.

In 1951 the Lodge sold that old hall to Tom Yuen, a restaurant operator and in July moved into the new Community Hall as tenants. The organization had previously loaned the club \$2,000.00 which was paid back in installments.

The Lodge has experienced its "ups and downs", but, as a rule, has been very active in the community. At the present time the membership numbers 32 with approximately 25 resident members including several from Coultervale. Its members have scattered from Ontario to the west coast. Messrs. Charles Edgar and George White were faithful members of the organization for years; R.A. Laing left to reside in Winnipeg in 1911; and A.W. Murray moved to Saskatchewan in 1909. All these original members and organizers of the Lodge have gone to their reward now.

## WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

*- Mrs. Laura Murray*

Sound guidance was needed in our homes, our schools, our clubs and our community. Such leadership was found in the Women's Institute which surged ahead because of women who possessed ability and energy. The W.I. aims to be a means of better education for the women in a community and its motto is "For Home and Country and for the Community".

The Lyleton W.I. was organized in August, 1918 and issued charter No. 62. The officers in charge were: Mrs. Cheney-president; Mrs. George Caney-vice-president; and Mrs. R. Murray-secretary. These worthy women remained in office until 1925 which ensured the first establishment of this newly-organized W.I. There is no record of the other charter members, but we

feel sure that Mrs. Riddell, Mrs. Chalmers, Mrs. Boyle and Mrs. Robert Murray were among them.

The projects and accomplishments of this organization form an impressive list. In its infancy the Lyleton W.r. raised money to assist in the building of the community rink and the village sidewalks, to maintain the cemetery and to help community members who needed assistance.

In 1926 our W.I. paid for the cement and had the foundation laid for the skating rink which was in operation by that Christmas. The rink was built by volunteer labor for which Mrs. Kett organized the work groups exceedingly well as she would not accept "No" for an answer.

During this time the W.I. had sponsored Baby and Dental clinics, assisted with Music Festivals and Drama League, sponsored a "Travelling Library" secured the services of a District Nurse, and in the year 1926 helped secure a resident doctor, Dr. Pearl. The W.r. had given their support to St. John's Ambulance and First Aid courses.



*Dr. Sarah Pearl, a beloved addition to Lyleton, who has been described as a ray of sunshine with a heart of gold.*

A well-preserved copy of the Tenth Anniversary program held March 29, 1928 in the L.O.O.F. Hall discloses that Mrs. Cheney was convener of the evening at which 43 guests (W.L members and husbands) assembled.

During the evening, Mrs. Kett had commented upon the dressmaking and millinery classes, the bales of clothing which had been sent to the Children's Home and the eggs to Gimli and the Robertson Fresh Air Camps every year. "In fact, we endeavor to do our best by every cause and to give a helping hand."

During the depression years when the district was known as the "dust bowl of Manitoba", the W.L was instrumental in distributing the clothing, bedding, vegetables, etc., which were shipped in from more fortunate areas.

In 1938 the 20th birthday party was held at the home of one of the members, Loretta Gardiner. Here the members

and guests assembled on the lawn and, while they sampled a huge birthday cake, they reviewed their twenty years of endeavor.

During the war years, 1939-45, extra efforts were made to raise money for Red Cross purposes and all willing hands were involved in sewing and knitting for the troops and the hospitals. Needy families in Britain were remembered with food parcels. In one year alone, 82 quilts were made and shipped to headquarters. Here again Mrs. Kett was a driving force behind our quilting efforts. The Red Cross sewing and knitting was then dropped for a few years to be resumed in 1958,

The group made a special effort to raise money for a community hall which was finally a reality in 1950. Donations were made to hospitals in nearby towns and to the Senior Citizens Homes as they were established. A 4-H Sewing Club was sponsored and a trophy was made available to the Calf and Seed Clubs. Contributions assisted in the maintenance of the W.I. Nook at the International Peace Garden.



*Faithful W.I. Members- This picture was taken outside of the community hall at a W.I. meeting in May 1952. All the ladies were over 65. Left to right: Mrs. H. Riddell, Mrs. R. Kett, Mrs. C. Edgar, Mrs. J. Schottenbauer, MJs. Boyle, Mrs. Brough and Mrs. C. Chalmers.*

1953 was one of Manitoba's worst polio years and in response to an appeal for funds, the W.I. sponsored a bazaar in aid of the March of Dimes. Raising money for charitable organizations has always been something of a headache, as canvassing seems to touch so few. But after the success of the 1954 bazaar, and under the capable leadership of the president, Mrs. Dan Kraaksma, the plan was devised for a combined drive similar to Red Feather campaign. The idea of a drive, without aid of various raffles, was accepted by the members and in January, 1955 the first bazaar was held in the Community Centre. The donated articles would be sold by auction. The three charities to benefit from this

bazaar were the Canadian National Institute of the Blind, the Cancer Society and the March of Dimes, and the sum of \$151.50 was split three ways. The bazaars continued for the next few years with ever-increasing success. Then in 1959 another charity, the Children's Aid Society, was added to the original trio. The sale receipts in 1959 amounted to \$278.15 and indicated that the idea was acceptable to all. This charity bazaar continues to be an annual activity of the group.

During the 51 years our local W.I. group has been hostesses to the South West District Convention three times: 1931, 1944 and 1955, under the presidency of Mrs. C.A. Chalmers, Mrs. G. Brough, and Mrs. Dan Braaksma respectively. Since our district has been enlarged to such an extent, we are now too small to entertain the convention. Delegates are sent from our local each year to district and provincial conventions, to leadership schools in Brandon and to training schools in Melita. T.B. and Blood clinics continue to receive our wholehearted support.

In 1957 we did our best to obtain a music teacher for the area, but in this we failed. Our efforts, however, aroused concern on the part of the municipal school board which offered a yearly reimbursement to each pupil who took music lessons during the year. This move had proved a wonderful incentive and many girls and a few boys are becoming quite proficient on the piano and organ.

A sound system was purchased by the group in 1958 and is used in the hall and rink and even in the park for special events. That year also brought forward a motion to raise funds by catering to weddings and other functions whenever this was required.

We have sponsored various educational courses offered by our home economists over the years. I think the one organized by ourselves in 1966 at which everyone instructed a particular handicraft was the most successful because everyone was deeply and keenly involved.

Our group approached the rink committee in 1964 with the idea of enlarging the rink waiting room. What a relief it would be to have more space for the preparation of lunches at bonspiel times! Our group not only raised money for the project, but also supplied lunches to the volunteer workers. Our wish came true and the newly-enlarged waiting room was officially opened on New Year's Eve of 1966. What a way to introduce Canada's Centennial at Lyleton!

1965 marked the appointment of the local history committee and the first steps were taken to contact next-of-kin, to collect old pictures, and to recall pioneer tales. Every means was then employed to raise the necessary funds which would be required for the publication of this tribute to Lyleton's pioneers,

Lyleton W.I. celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1968. Many months of work went into the planning of this celebration. Invitations were sent to all surviving former members and to the neighboring local groups. This busy committee consisted of: Mrs. Pres Bird (president), Miss Anne Murray, Mrs. Keith Murray, Mrs. Ross McNish, Mrs. Phyllis Clark, Mrs. Laura Murray, and Mrs. Harvey White. The cake for the occasion was made and decorated by Mrs. Ross McNish and Mrs. Jim Caney. On June 18, 85 guests assembled to review the 50 years of organization, to enjoy sing-songs and skits, and to admire a colorful display of W.I. handicrafts.



*During Lyleton's Centennial celebrations, these authentic outfits were worn. The dress in the middle was Mrs. Philip Reekie's wedding dress and the one on the left was her travelling dress to come from Ontario to the log shanty on S.W. ½ of 6-1-28. Her mother had made both of these dresses in 1880. The right hand dress was also made in 1880 for Mrs. Hector McIvish's mother.*

Now that we have begun on the next half century of organization, we realize that over the years we have been a very harmonious group with just enough differences of opinion to make us weigh our ideas in order to achieve the best for all. May the W.r. long retain its rightful place in furthering the best interests of the community of Lyleton. One of our greatest achievements has been to collect the family records of the Lyleton pioneers as evidenced in Chapter 9.





*Five pioneers of Lyleton, who all homesteaded in the area in 1882 to 1884.  
Standing, left to right: A. Beaton, J. Wilson, M. Little.  
Sitting: Andrew Lyle, A. Gould of Coulter.*

## IONEERS 1880 - 1910

By 1880, after a decade of trial, Manitoba was at last being settled by a rush of farmers from Ontario. In the rural districts of Ontario, young and old were being smitten by the "Manitoba fever". Many of these gravitated to the treeless areas of Lyleton where valuable time would not be lost to clearing and burning. They may have come via St. Paul and Emerson or by train to the new terminal of Brandon. But come they did-singly, in groups, temporarily, and permanently. Descendents have checked memory and records to help the present recall the hardships, accomplishments and fellowships of the past.

### THE PHILIP BISH REEKIE FAMILY

- Mrs. Martha Cranston

During 1880 and 1881, Mr. and Mrs. Philip Bish Reekie lived on a rented farm in Grey County, near Thornbury, Ontario. It was impossible to buy good farm land in that area, so they decided to sell their farm equipment and try their luck in Manitoba, if they could locate wood and water.

In the fall of 1881, Mr. Philip Reekie, my father and his brother, Abram Reekie, travelled on train via Detroit and St. Paul, United States, to Winnipeg where they found work near Sprague, Manitoba, in George Streevel's R.R. camp, until early spring 1882 when they left to go farther west to Brandon. It had been a very wet fall and much of the good land west of Winnipeg was flooded.

In Brandon, they met Andrew Lyle and George Rice, who had travelled by buckboard in the fall of 1881 into southwestern Manitoba, as far as the second crossing of the Souris River, near what is now Oxbow, Saskatchewan. They too had been looking for wood and water. Although the land had been surveyed, it was not yet open for homesteading. However, they chose land and en route to Winnipeg for winter work, they called at the Dominion Lands Office, Turtle Mountain Agency, in Deloraine, about six miles southeast of the present Deloraine. There they learned that township 1 was open for entry and Mr. Lyle filed for 10-1-28 W and Mr. Rice for 4-1-28 W.

Abram Reekie's misfortune of having cut his foot while cutting ties in the camp kept him in Brandon, living in a tent to guard the salt pork, flour, oxen and other homesteading necessities, while his brother Philip went with Mr. Rice to see the homesteading land.

They headed southwestward with two sleighs and two yoke of oxen. Near Plum Creek, now Souris, the snow had melted and the loads were too heavy on bare ground, so they left one well-loaded sleigh. Someone

had shot a big bird on a knoll, and Mr. Rice put it in a flour sack and left it hidden in the sleigh-road.

After father had decided on land, Mr. Rice and he started back to Brandon for supplies. En route, Father filed on his land the S.W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of 6-1-28, west of the first meridian. His Homestead Entry Receipt, No. 2467, dated April 26, 1882, is for the sum of ten dollars, being the fee required by the "Act Respecting the Public Lands of the Dominion", to be paid on filing an application to be entered for a Homestead Right. Across the top of the Homestead Entry Receipt is written - "No. 2468 Pre N.W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  Sec. 6, Tp. I, Rge. 28W - \$10.00 fee paid."

They were not surprised to see that their loaded sleigh, which they had parked near Souris, was just as they had left it. Mr. Rice took his bird along to Brandon and just by chance, he met a taxidermist who gave him \$6.00 for his pelican.

When Uncle Abe heard the news of land, the thought of a farm beside his brother brought him to Deloraine to enter on the other half of the section. They both came on to the future district of Lyleton and Uncle Abe helped father to put up a little sod shanty on the north bank of the South Antler Creek on the S.W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of 6-1-28 W.

The essential furnishings in that shanty were a bed, stove, table, water pail, a couple of iron pots, a little pail-shaped copper kettle for cooking, and a flour barrel which was never completely empty.

After the Reekie brothers had left Ontario in search of work and homesteads, Mother was preparing for the trip to their own home. Father had received encouraging letters from her, addressed to him at "Section 6, Township 1, Range 28 W, Manitoba."

Mother and a thirteen-months-old daughter, Minnie, left in July for Manitoba and Father met them in Brandon, but the trunk full of clothes did not arrive with them. They waited a week in a tent where the oxen were tethered, near where the Beaubier Hotel was later built. There were no streets, but there were a few small stores, so Mother bought some print to make a dress by hand. Father had been collecting supplies during his spare time and from a man who had decided to return home, he bought a cow for \$54.00. She could walk as fast as the yoke of oxen hitched to their wagon.

So without the trunk, they started across the prairies in company with Ali Gould and J.B. Elliott, who were going out to their holdings at Sourisford. Those were the days when everybody helped anyone in need, and some other settler brought the trunk.

From Deloraine there should have been a fairly good prairie road leading to the first crossing of the Souris River, about a mile north of the present Coulter Park at Sourisford, as everyone from the east had to cross there to get into southwest Manitoba.

The government had sent men of the Boundary Commission, under the leadership of David Thompson, to survey the 49th parallel of latitude, the boundary between the United States and Canada,

Canada, before the men who surveyed the land for homesteads.

Mr. Elliott helped to pitch the Reekie tent after having crossed the Souris via boat operated by a Mr. Eastman. Mother was the first married woman to cross in the boat. In the morning the cow had a very sore foot, having snagged it on a branch while crossing the river banks, so she had to be left behind. There was plenty of grass that year to feed the cow and oxen, and all of the Ontario men knew how to handle a scythe.

It was the fifth day since they had left Brandon, but no doubt they were joyful with the thoughts of nearing their own property, eighteen or twenty miles distant. The sight of the little sod shanty must have been a grand welcome, July 14, 1882.

Bless their dear young hearts! They were so full of Faith, Hope and Charity.

Due to prairie fires having burned over the woods to the south of the creek a few years before their arrival, they could see from their shanty door, the unsurveyed prairies of what was later the state of North Dakota, United States, surveyed in 1887.

There were many new elm trees and they named their place Elm Grove.

Father was the only married man for miles, so Mother truly was the first lady of that area.

After several days, Uncle Abe walked to Sourisford and brought home the cow. I can't recall that she ever had a name, but no doubt she was a short-horn and had the distinction of being the first milking cow in southwestern Manitoba.

It was late in the fall of 1882, while Father was returning from Brandon, that he persuaded a Souris woman to sell him one hen and one rooster. From another woman, Mrs. Ballantyne, he got another hen that brought forth thirteen chickens. But when mother was off guard, Baby Minnie squeezed the necks of five chicks.

After having left Deloraine, they had seen a house on the west side of the Turtle Mountains, east of the present town of Goodlands, and Mother had been told that there was a woman living there. Several miles west they had seen a woman standing in the doorway of a new poplar shack. It was a duration of nine months before Mother saw another woman. One Sunday in April, 1883, she was amazed to see walking towards the shanty, a man and woman-Steve Leitham and his sister Harriet. They had walked seven miles to visit the Reekies.

Father had been fortunate finding good drinking water where water reeds were growing, very close to the shanty. He had heard in Ontario that the reeds were a good sign of water. He had made a garden too, but there was no basement and the potatoes which he pitted for the winter, like people in Ontario had done, were all frozen. There never was an idle moment. Father had oxen, a cow, and hens to winter, so he needed a sod stable and it would have taken hours to scythe grass for feed. Then there was the firewood to cut for the

shanty and logs to prepare for a log house. Lime stones, off the fields, were hauled to a lime kiln, a hole which had been dug in the creek bank. The heat from wooden blocks burned in the hole, broke down the stones and the lime obtained was used with water to make mortar for chinking the logs, and for whitewash to whiten the logs inside the house.

Uncle Abe was a great help, but he too needed help to build his place and it wasn't until 1891 that he returned to Ontario and brought out Mother's sister, Dinah, as his bride. She has left a few notes, and states grain was grown on 22-2-27 in 1881 and that A.W. Reekie, Uncle Abe, threshed the first grain grown west of the Souris River, with the flail and cleaned it in the wind.

In 1883 in a sad shanty located on the homestead, 6-1-28, a baby boy was born-one year before a registry office was opened in Melita. He was the first white child born west of the Souris River in southwest Manitoba. His parents, Mr. and Mrs. Phillip Bish Reekie, named him John Rendall Reekie.

He did not receive much education as country summer schools were few and miles away for walking. One winter, before the days of Lyleton town, he stayed in Melita and attended Melita Public School. Later, John attended Fargo, North Dakota, Agricultural College.

In 1902 his father died. In that era, boys were boys and he had not been allowed to choose and purchase even a fifteen-cent tin pot lid. But he courageously helped his mother to make a home and educate seven sisters, a niece, and a brother.

In his younger years he served his time on the boards of Copley and Lyleton School, the church, the elevator, the Lyleton Shipping Association, and on several committees of the Lyleton district.

After almost eighty-three years on the homestead he very reluctantly left the wood and coal fires to reside with propane, near many of his country neighbors in friendly, picturesque Melita.

The birth of son, John, has been recorded as that of the first white child and the death of "Elizabeth" their infant daughter, in September 1888 was the first death of the district and burial took place on the homestead.

#### ELIZABETH REEKIE, R.N.

First graduate nurse of southwest Manitoba: Born May 30, 1889 in a log house on S.W. ½ Sec. 6, Township 1, Range 28 W.-the fifth daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Philip Bish Reekie.

Elizabeth had always desired to be a nurse, but her only education was obtained at Copley rural summer school, before Lyleton knew about higher standards of education.

She studied a Home Course of Nursing and her great ambition got her to Pomona Valley Hospital, Pomona, California. At the completion of her three years of training 1919, she was supervisor of the surgery.



*Elizabeth (Lizzie) Reekie, registered nurse 1889-1965-first graduate nurse of south-west Manitoba.*

Lyleton hadn't any local nurses then, so when her mother developed typhoid fever, she came home to care of her.

She had been instructed to keep calm, reassure the patient and call the doctor but there were few doctors-miles away, few cars, and telephones often out of commission.

For major operations in homes, she made required sponges, which she sterilized in a wash boiler, while awaiting the doctor's arrival. A room was cleared and the dining table served as the operating area.

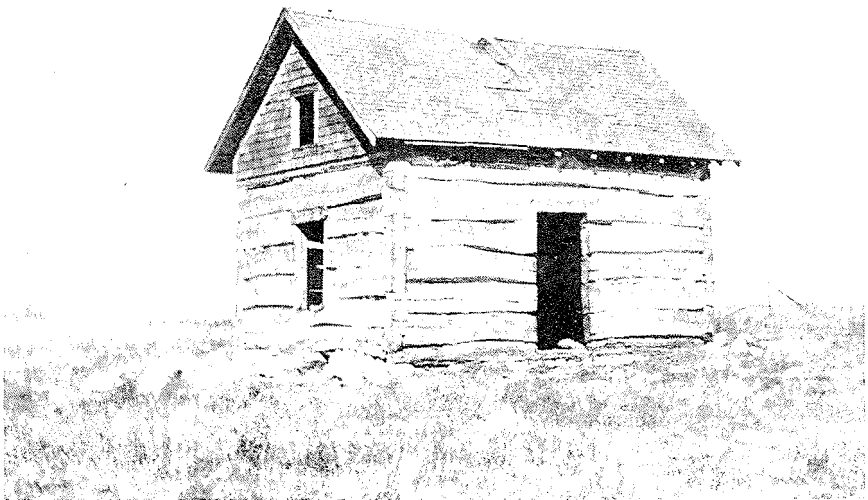
Her life was devoted to others, and her death in 1965 was keenly felt by all who had known her.

### ROBERT JAMES TOOKE

- E.D. Tooke

Robert James Tooke, one of the earliest pioneers in the district west of the Souris River, was born at Platesville, Ontario in 1869. He came to Manitoba in 1879 and spent the next two years at Manitou with relatives. On coming west in 1881 he homesteaded two miles north of Coulter-a little west of the Pioneer Picnic ground.

While proving up the homestead, he met and married Elizabeth Fraser, daughter of a Scottish family originally from Nova Scotia. Hugh Fraser and Robert (Bob) Tooke working together built what is now the log cabin in the Pioneer Picnic grounds. (My one sister, Mrs. Dan MacFarlane, of Montana, being alive and well at this time of writing, was born in that log cabin.)



*Hugh Fraser's log house on its original site-now in Sourisford Park.*

The Frasers enjoyed music and brought west with them the bagpipes which Hugh played well. Hugh's son, James, was a great old time violin player. (It is possible that some still remember his playings). Another great Scotsman and bagpipe player, by the name of Johnny McPhail, came west at the same time. This tall rangy man used to walk back and forth as is customary while playing bagpipes. Mrs. Tooke liked to tell about John tramping around the log cabin with its low ceilings. One night John hit the stovepipes and down they came-smoke and soot over everything!

Around 1891 the Tookes moved to Pierson and ran a livery barn. From there Bob hauled the mail to what was then the Lyleton post office and experienced many a hard drive over winter roads. Mrs. Tooke ran a hotel in Pierson, the structure of which was torn down only a few years ago.

The Tookes then left Pierson around 1900 and moved to the South Antler where they remained until both parents passed away after living to the ripe old age of 87 years and had celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary. There were thirteen children born to this couple: Ted, Ida, Irene, Bob, Beatrice, Newton, Pearl, Marge, Nitelle, Clifford, Leonard, William and Elwood.

As I, the youngest son of the Tooke family, write this account, I think of many things that I heard from my mother and father about the pioneer days. How they hauled wheat in sacks from Sourisford to Deloraine by team or oxen-one day to go and one to return! They were usually loaded both ways; grain one way and freight back home. This freight was brought back to the store at Sourisford run by A. Gould. My mother often stayed alone in the log cabin while Father made these trips.

The pioneers had trying experiences but I am sure they enjoyed that era as they were all "in the same boat". Everyone was a great neighbor, the country was fairly new, land was turned by the plow, new buildings appeared on the horizon, and new settlers continued to take up claims. It is a pleasure to recall these days and the worthy men and women who first settled in our district.

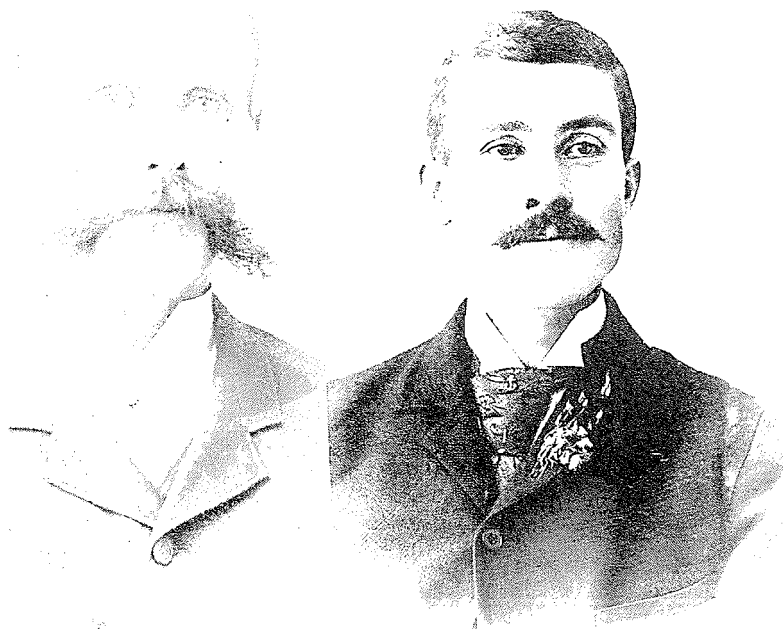
#### THE LYLE FAMILY, FROM SMITHS FALLS, ONTARIO

- Miss Anne Murray

In September 1881 Andrew Lyle and George Rice of Smiths Falls, Ontario first came to the Lyleton district. However, since the land was surveyed but had not been opened for homesteading, they returned to Winnipeg via the Old Deloraine Land Office, where they secured entry for their land. They spent the winter in the bush and returned in the spring of '82 to settle this new land with their fellow pioneers, P.B. and A.W. Reekie. Like all early settlers, they located along the Antler Creek in order to secure wood and water, Andrew Lyle remained on 10-1-28 until his death in 1935. He was predeceased by his wife, Annetta Butler, whom he had married in 1892, and by his only son, Frederick, who passed away as a young man.

Andrew Lyle was a loyal supporter of every good cause in the community. As a faithful member of the Presbyterian Church, he opened his home to the first church services to be held in the district. This same home became the first post office to which mail was brought by team from Pierson by Robert Tooke. (Consequently, the district was called Lyleton.) He took a very active





*Andrew Lyle homesteaded 10-1-28 in 1881.  
Notice the bar style of mustache.*

*A.M. Lyle, who served as M.L.A. for the  
Arthur constituency from 1910 to 1914.*

part in the building of a church in town and served on the board of managers. In later years, Andrew Lyle gave further support as an elder of the United Church.

Andrew Lyle was followed by his brother, Samuel, who homesteaded land adjacent to 10-1-28 where he continued to live as a bachelor until his death in 1912.

Andrew's sister, Martha, came to the Lyleton district in 1888 to keep house for him and remained with him in this capacity until she married William White.

Another brother, John, came to this district in 1891. He and his wife, Frances Featherstone, settled across the road from Andrew Lyle. Two nieces, Ivy and Myrtle Patterson, made their home with John and Frances as did their foster son, Harry Lyle, who now resides in Virden. Following John Lyle's death in 1928, Mrs. Lyle built a house in Lyleton and lived there until her passing.

A fourth member of the Lyle family, Amos, came to Manitoba in 1886. After five years in British Columbia, he returned to Lyleton and had taken up a

homestead along the Antler Creek by 1899. His wife was the former Lilian Lyle of the Kitley township in Ontario.

A.M. Lyle was a staunch conservative and contested the riding of Arthur first in 1907, but was defeated by three votes. The election of 1910 brought victory and he then served in the legislature until another defeat in 1914.

He was a loyal citizen and was never too busy to help in the promotion of community projects; and in his early days he took a keen interest in curling. The first school in the district was built on his land. He also gave land for the cemetery which has been in use since that time.



*Lyleton gents visiting Winnipeg.  
Back row, left to right:  
R.A. Laing, J.B. Lorimer,  
J.S. Cosgrove, C. Martin, E. W. Line.  
Seated: A.M. Lyle, Charles Edgar.*

#### MR. AND MRS. A.W. REEKIE

- by Anna (Reekie) Metruk

Abram Wright Reekie was born near Thornbury, Ontario, December 17, 1858. In the fall of 1881 he accompanied his elder brother, Philip, to Manitoba where the land in the extreme southwest corner had been surveyed and was soon to be opened for homesteading. Reaching Winnipeg by train, via Chicago and St. Paul, the brothers worked for a time on a race track that was being built in Winnipeg. Then, with the approach of winter, they went to George Strevel's railroad tie camp where they spent the winter.

It was while they were hewing logs in the bush at Whitemouth that they met Andrew Lyle and George Rice who had driven by buckboard along the Boundary Commission Trail as far as Oxbow in the fall of 1881 before coming back to Township I, Range 28 and making a choice of lands. The Reekie men decided they would go out in the spring to the same area.

However, Abram (or Abe as he was called by his friends), had cut his foot quite badly and he stopped in Brandon to receive care for it. Living in a tent, he kept watch over the provisions and equipment, including oxen, while the others went on.

When Philip Reekie, after making entry for W.½ 6-1-28, came back and described the country, the South Antler, "as well treed with elm, ash, maple and poplar; and an abundance of wild fruit trees, saskatoons, wild plums and choke-cherries," Abe at once went to Deloraine to file on the east half of 6-1-28.

As Philip's wife and small daughter were expected in July, Abe helped his brother build a sod house on the north bank of the South Antler whose course led it through the two Reekie homesteads close to the boundary line between Canada and the United States. Abe's sod house was built next. Dug down about two feet into the ground, with an earth floor, it was about ten by twelve feet. Abe made the necessary furniture, a table, chairs and a bed, using logs from the bush. Here he batched for almost nine years.

It is interesting to note that Abe Reekie threshed the first grain grown west of the Souris River with the flail and cleaned it in the wind. It was wheat grown on 22-2-27 by Gould and Elliott in 1881. Of interest, also, are tax receipts of those years (some of which are in the possession of a son, Randel Reekie). In 1886 taxes on this land were 40 cents a quarter. At the turn of the century they had increased to ten dollars a quarter.

In the fall of 1890 Abe went back to Ontario and when he returned in the spring he brought with him his bride, Dinah Rendall, sister of Mrs. P.B. Reekie. They came as far as Deloraine by train, and made the rest of the journey over rough prairie trails by team and wagon.

Mrs. A.W. Reekie came to a comparatively comfortable home, a log house about 18 by 22 feet with an upstairs, built a few years previously. Sometime during the 1890's a sad kitchen was built onto the log house. There was also a substantial sad stable, 28 by 30 feet, with double stalls, a four-foot alley and hewed posts.

By this time, many homesteads had been taken up and there were several women and children in the district. There were community gatherings and schools were being planned. But it was still "pioneer times" with the nearest doctor at Melita 30 miles away and Deloraine, more than 50 miles distant, the nearest town with railway service. However, in 1891, a C.P.R. branch line came through to Pierson 14 miles away. The long trips to Deloraine and Brandon were no longer necessary.

Eight children were born to Mr. and Mrs. Reekie. The first-born, Mary Elizabeth, died in infancy and the youngest, a son, died at birth. George Aram, Mary Rendall (Mrs. George Crossman), Anna Bella (Mrs. M. Metruk), John Archibald, and Randel are living in Manitoba, and Elizabeth Sinclair (Eliza) who resides in Toronto.

In 1900 a large two-storey stone house was built, which of late years has been modernized inside and still stands, a tribute to bygone years. Three years later a fine barn was built, the first in the district to have hay slings installed. It was fitted with double horse and cattle stalls, mangers with grain boxes, box stalls, and feed chutes in the loft floor. As years passed, improvements were made-water was piped into the house and about 1914 a power washer with gasoline engine was in use. In 1917 a Delco lighting plant was installed. With electric lights in the house and barn, also, a yard light, the days of the sod shanty and coal oil lamps were past.

An early thresher, A.W. Reekie, in 1901, in partnership with his brother Philip purchased a Waterloo Steam Outfit-low bagger, straw carrier, and hand feeder. After a few years Abe took over the outfit and threshed for many years in the district.

Through the years Mr. and Mrs. Reekie supported all community activities, being especially interested in church and school affairs. Members of the Presbyterian Church, Mr. Reekie served on the church board and also on the school board of the Copley district. He was a member of the Pioneer Picnic Association. In his later years he enjoyed curling and only an extremely cold day kept him from his game.

In July, 1919, Mr. and Mrs. Reekie were called to Ontario by the illness of his aged mother who passed away shortly after their arrival. After spending a month holidaying and renewing old acquaintances, Mr. Reekie became ill and passed away in Toronto, August 12, 1919.

Mrs. Reekie was an active member of the Ladies' Aid, a charter member of the Women's Institute and Missionary Society. She was an excellent quilter and there were few quilts done by the different organizations in which she didn't lend a hand. She kept up her knitting, crocheting and other fancy work until she was over ninety.

Mrs. Reekie took up residence in Pierson in 1936. An avid reader with a retentive memory, she could quote many lengthy poems, many of them learned in her youth. During her retirement years, as during her years on the farm, her flowers and garden were a source of pleasure to many. An eager traveller, always "ready to go", advancing age did not deter her from taking trips by car or train back to her old home in Ontario. When she was 89, she flew to Vancouver, returning a few months later by the same mode of travel. She passed away August 18, 1956 in her 94th year.

#### THE JANIES B. COSGROVE FAMILY

- *By W.R. Cosgrove*

During the Irish famine of the 1840's, three of Thomas Cosgrove's sons of Antrim, Ireland immigrated to Canada. Thomas, the eldest, settled in Bruce County, which at that time was an unsettled forest-studded area. He married a Canadian lass and James Barnes Cosgrove was one of the offspring.

James Barnes Cosgrove came west in 1880 to Brandon. From there, he and a chum took a group of Englishmen (some of them titled) across the prairies to Fort McLeod near the foothills, to locate sites at which towns might be established. Jim was the horseman and his friend, Dave Breakinridge, was the cook on this expedition. During this trip, the Indians stole a pair of their best ponies and many times the group was stopped by unfriendly Indians. After six weeks of travelling, they arrived at Fort McLeod. Six weeks from Brandon to McLeod-and today it can be done in an hour and one-half by plane! (Another good reason why the history of our courageous pioneers should be recorded).

Jim returned to his Ontario home and in 1881 he headed a group of settlers who were intent on acquiring homesteads. Most of these pioneers located in an area bounded today by Napinka, Deloraine, Waskada, and Melita. With another group of settlers he returned again in 1882 accompanied by his

wife, Mary Matilda Vail (of U.E. Loyalist stock), and his son, Wilfred, who was probably one of the youngest homesteaders in the area.

James B. selected a farm halfway between what is now Medora and Waskada and nine miles south of Melita. His first farm was located in 20-1-27 where he built a large house and farm buildings on the west bank of the South Antler. Later he added several farms to the spread. Some of the names of his close neighbors were: Storey, McKinnon, Cameron, Wrens, Riley, Collard, McKague, Jellis, and Harden. (During the first World War, five of his sons enlisted and the farm was sold.)

When his homestead duties were completed he went into the Massey-Harris business with a Mr. Thomas in Deloraine. After three years in Moosomin, Saskatchewan, he was transferred again to Melita with his family. James B. remained with the Massey-Harris Co. as supervisor until 1912 when Mr. and Mrs. Cosgrove moved to Winnipeg where he finished out his working years as a Federal Pure Food and Drug inspector. He died in 1931 and was followed by his wife in 1932. Both are buried in the family plot at Melita.

One son, Fred, stayed in Melita apprenticed to J.W. Hewitt, Druggist, and graduated from Pharmacy College in Winnipeg. Shortly after, he bought the drugstore in Lyleton from Dr. Perrin. Here he played hockey and baseball with the Gardners and the Murrays. Here also, he met Ernestine Cable, a school teacher at Copley. Two years later they were married and went to Napinka where he bought Dr. Casselman's store. After ten years as druggist in Napinka, he moved to Gladstone for another ten years before he retired from the drug business and moved to Winnipeg. The family consisted of two sons, Keith and Jack, and two daughters, Marion and Gertrude. Mrs. Fred Cosgrove passed away in 1963.

Fred bought the Harden farm, 4-2-27, where was located an old log house in a fairly good state of repair although it had been unoccupied for years. This was the last such building remaining in the district. It was preserved for the future when Charles Sankey of Waskada was president of Pioneers' Picnic Committee and sponsored its move to the present Gould site. What a wonderful memorial to our pioneer settlers! When several settlers from the Lyleton district moved to Bow Island in southern Alberta, another son, Jack Cosgrove, joined them. He later died at Bow Island.

A third son, Joseph G. Cosgrove, married Ina Reid, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Reid from south of Lyleton. Ina died while they were living at Crystal City. Joseph and his two daughters, Edith and Wilma, then moved to Winnipeg. Joe now lives part of the year with Wilma in Grassy Lake and the other part with Edith in Calgary. Joe was gassed in action during the First War and has suffered many operations since.

Jim (J.S.) bought grain in Lyleton for several years and also married a school teacher, Roxie Bride. They then went into business in Tilston and have since retired to Brandon. They have two sons-Claire in Winnipeg and Bert who is a doctor in the Wilfred Penfield Institute in Montreal.

A daughter, Mabel, married Dr. D.P. Stratton who was a dentist in Melita and later in Winnipeg. Both are dead now. Bertha married Robert McCourt, a post office employee, and there were two daughters, one of whom

still lives in Winnipeg.

George T. married in Regina, bought grain in Lyleton and Assiniboia. He became fieldman for the Co-op before he retired to live as he does today in Delisle. (During the First World War he was decorated with the Military Cross.) He has two sons, Jim and Arnott.

Walter and Alex farmed the Charlie Reid farm for a number of years. Walter moved to Winnipeg where he married Helen Carson. Their only son, Chris, teaches school near Winnipeg. Alex married Jean Jones of Tilston and operated a garage in Oak Lake for many years. They live in Brandon now as does their son, Grant, who is employed by the Manitoba Department of Good Roads. Their other son, Ken, was killed accidentally at Kenora.

Roger married Helen Morey and he too worked in the post office. He was transferred to Vancouver where he retired.

Bert was shot down in flames four days before the war ended in 1918.

The James B. Cosgrove family of eleven children have served Canada well and have settled throughout this fair land.

## ROBERT FANNING

- *Vina Craven*

In 1882, in response to the lure of the west, Robert Fanning left farming near Peterborough, Ontario, to take up a homestead in Manitoba on the N.E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of 4-2-28. (In later years he added S.E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of 4-2-28). Because he lacked building materials, his house was built part way into the bank of the North Antler Creek. This had a great advantage of warmth in the winter.

In November, 1883, his wife and seven children (six girls and one boy) came from Ontario to be with him in this new land. Mr. Fanning met them at Brandon which was the nearest railway point and brought them and their meagre belongings across the prairie trails by a covered wagon which was drawn by a team of mules. It was a hard first winter, but they managed to establish a comfortable home.

There were a few other pioneer families within a few miles who got Mrs. Fanning to bake bread for them. Church services were held in the homes. Some members of the Fanning family attended the first school in the district, North Antler School.

It was necessary to go to Brandon for supplies and each trip, by wagon, took days. Mrs. Fanning usually accompanied her husband to acquire these necessary articles. Two heads were better than one; a forgotten article could create problems for months until the next trip.

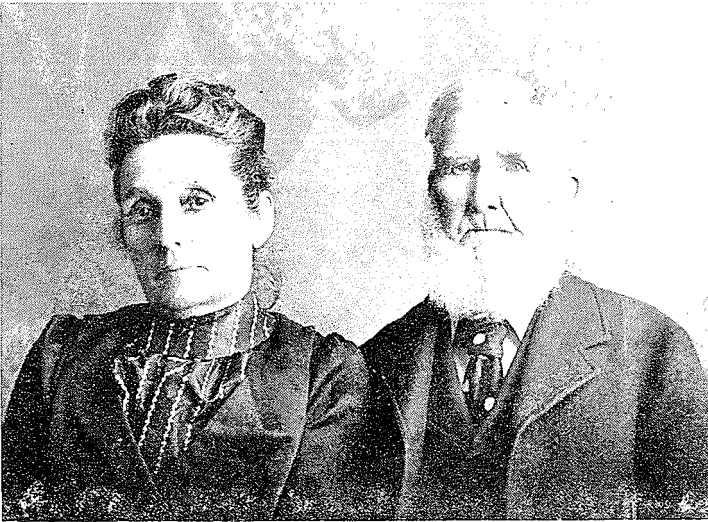
When the railroad was laid through Pierson, the Fannings moved to a farm one mile south of the town. What a change from the earlier distances for supplies! They farmed on this location until their retirements. The only remaining connection of this family is myself, Vina Craven.

## THE WHITE FAMILY

Richard White was born in Trafalgar Township in Ontario in 1827. His wife was the former Lorinda Springstead who bore him three sons and two daughters.

The eldest son, William, had moved west in 1881 along with Thomas Green. They walked into the Lyleton area from Brandon carrying a gun, an axe, flour and their bedding. They acquired a team of horses and began to homestead on 14-1-28. Green died on the homestead in 1892 and was buried in the cemetery at Copley beside the old stone English Church.

Will's parents and two brothers, Burleigh and George, joined him in 1883. After arrival in Brandon with their settlers' effects, they travelled by team and wagon to their new home in Lyleton where they took up homesteading on the N.W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of 12-1-28. They managed to bring one item of luxury with them from Ontario- a cow.



*Mr. and Mrs. Richard White who celebrated their golden anniversary at the home place in 1907.*

They soon established a hospitable, Christian home. Mrs. White was a wonderfully capable pioneer woman who never shrank from a long, cold drive to comfort or to help those in need and served as a doctor and a nurse in many emergencies. She will long be remembered by many as "the lady with the lamp". Her daughter, Mrs. Robert Murray, who arrived here in 1890, followed in her mother's footsteps in caring for the sick and the dying.

During the early years on the homestead, they hauled their grain to Virden and got their groceries and mail at Sourisford which was the nearest store. Mr. and Mrs. Richard White continued to reside on the homestead until their deaths in 1908 and 1910 respectively.

Their son, Will, married Martha Lyle in 1893. She had come from

Smiths Falls, Ontario to keep house for her brother, Samuel Lyle. Will and Martha resided on his homestead where four children were born: twin girls who survived in spite of being extremely small and born without medical assistance and two boys. The children attended the White school. The family was always keenly interested in the community and church. The White homes were frequently opened to the student missionaries who served the field.



*Mr. and Mrs. Will White who chose to pioneer twice in their lifetime.*

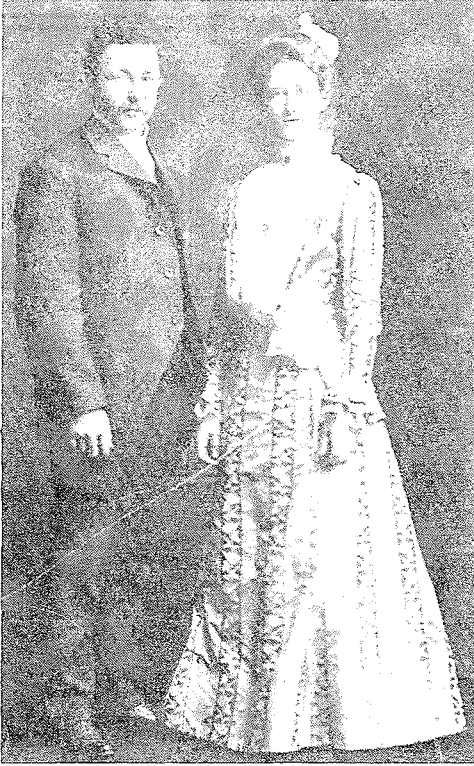
In 1904 Will went into business in a general store in the new village of Lyleton. In 1909 he chose to pioneer again. He settled his family in Weyburn for the winter while he located on a homestead near Limerick, Saskatchewan. There he built a sod stable and travelled 30 miles to the Wood Mountains for firewood. By camping at nights in a tent and travelling five days by wagon, he hauled lumber for his house from Moose Jaw 80 miles away.

The elder son, Roy, homesteaded in the Wood Mountain district until his enlistment in the First World War. Upon his return, he married and moved to British Columbia where he passed away at an early age.

The younger son, Ettrick, took over the home farm at Limerick where he was later killed in a tractor accident. The parents and daughter, Lou, moved into Limerick where the parents lived out their lives until 1936. The other twin, May, with her family and sister Lou then moved to British Columbia where they make their home in more comfort than they had experienced on the homesteads on the prairies.

A second son of Mr. and Mrs. Richard White, Burleigh, began to homestead along the South Antler Creek when he came of age. In 1903 he married Agnes Murray of Dufferin County, Ontario, who had come west to reside with relatives and who was the dressmaker of the district, moving from house to house throughout the area sewing for the families. They continued to reside on the homestead until 1926 when they built a house in Lyleton and resided there until his death in 1933 and hers in 1951.





They were constant and faithful members of the Methodist (later the United Church) in which he served as an elder. They were instrumental in promoting all community activities: she as a member of the women's church groups and he as a member of the Pioneer Association.

*The wedding picture of Mr. and Mrs. Burleigh White. Mrs. White wore her mother's brocade silk wedding dress made in 1854.*

George, the youngest son of Richard White, was only 12 when they arrived in the Lyleton area. George inherited the original homestead and married Elizabeth McLaren, a school teacher from the Copely district in 1901. There were three sons born to this marriage: Gordon, who is still on the original farm, Larry, who farms at Melita, and Harvey, who also farms at Lyleton and resides in the village. George White passed away in 1959 and Elizabeth passed away in 1948. Their sons continue in the White practice of support and interest in all community activities.



*Mr. and Mrs. George White and oldest son, Larry.*

## JOSEPH HOLMES

- *Grace Fulton (daughter of Lind  
Holmes Fulton)*

Joseph Holmes came out from Ontario in March, 1883 and took up a homestead on 10-2-28 where he built a 10' x 12' frame shack which was sodded on the outside for warmth. He returned to Ontario in time for Christmas. In March, 1884 he and his wife and family boarded a train which travelled from Millbrook, Ontario via the States to Brandon. Two or three of the settlers met them at Brandon with sleighs and oxen to transport them to the Walker house which was a stopping house on the North Antler Creek (later the farm of Robert Stinson). Before reaching this destination, they had overnight stops en route at the stopping houses of the Phinney brothers and the Smiths'.

Upon arrival at Walkers', who lived in a sad shack which was papered with newspapers, Mrs. Holmes and children remained for a week as Mrs. Holmes was very ill with a cold. Mr. Holmes had brought a team of horses with him in the boxcar of settlers' effects. Taking his son, Walter, with him, he crossed the North Antler to the homestead. Mrs. Holmes and children followed later, seated on crates containing hogs, geese and chickens. Life in the 10' by 12' shack was very crowded. At night, the tables and chairs had to go outside so that beds could be made on the floor. There were slats across the one end where the children slept foot to foot.

During the summer of 1884, Mr. Holmes turned his 18' by 24' granary into a house. For the walls of this home, he put boards on either side of the scantlings and filled the space between with concrete. The children slept in a tent and during one storm were soaked when the tent was blown down. Mrs. Holmes later ripped the tent apart and used it to make partitions for the house. Sods were placed upon the peaked roof on top of the tar-paper covered boards.

The floors were unpainted and had to be scoured. As soon as the budget would allow, the walls were wallpapered. Later, when boards were used to make a ceiling, an attic space for sleeping was left between these boards and the peaked roof. As there were no windows, it was very hot during the summer, but the heat given off by the stove pipes was very welcome during the cold winters. Wood was used in the stoves while kerosene and homemade tallow candles were used for lighting.

For the younger children, Mrs. Holmes made cloth shoes with leather sales which were cut from the tops of old shoes. Mr. Holmes didn't have a much-needed fur coat, so Mrs. Holmes made him a badger fur vest. The back of this vest was a tanned deer skin. He had caught, skinned and tanned the skins of two badgers which became the front of the vest. Mrs. Holmes tanned rabbit skins and made bonnets for the girls with a little cape hanging down the back. Cow hides were later tanned to make sleigh robes.

Some of the first church seivces were held in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Holmes. The Anglican, Baptist, Methodist and Presbyterians all held their services there alternately for several years; usually two services a Sunday by two of the denominations. Mr. A.H. Wheeler was the first Methodist minister.

Mr. Jim Downey's father, Rev. John Brown, was the first Presbyterian minister to preach in the Holmes' residence. Rev. Fred Oaten and his brother Charles also preached a few times there under the Methodist banner. Different denominations sent their students into the field during the summer and the whole neighborhood attended these services.

I think the mail came first to Gould's Store at Sourisford from Camduff. A few years later the mail was left at Mr. William Walker's. The mail centre was then moved to Butterfield where Andy Maitland was first postmaster followed by Charlie Wilcox. It was finally transferred to Lyleton where it remained.

Prairie fires were always a threat and often were fanned into flame after smoldering for days. A fire once broke out when there were only three children at home, namely, Martha (Mrs. Gregor Campbell), Emma (Mrs. Robert Dandy), and Halden. They set a backfire and saved the stacks only to find that the sods of the shack were on fire. An old quilt dipped in the creek was used to beat back the fire and save the shack. The new house was built in 1897 and still stands on the old homestead.

### JOHN HARKNESS

The Canadian prairies were still quite sparsely settled when John Harkness arrived from Scotland in March, 1884. He went first to relatives in the district of Winlaw in what was then known as Assiniboia, North West Territories (now the province of Saskatchewan.). In the following year, 1885, when Louis Riel's tragic massacre took place at Frog Lake, John Harkness volunteered for service. Communications were slow and Batoche on the Saskatchewan River was several hundred miles north so the troops had a hard march in bitter spring weather and when they arrived, the rebellion had been crushed.

By 1888 John Harkness had moved a few miles east into the province of Manitoba, to Lyleton, which was still a very young community. It had been first settled by the Lyle brothers, Andrew in 1881, Samuel in 1882, followed by Philip and Abe Reekie in the same year. They had chosen to homestead along what is now known as the South Antler Creek because it reminded them a little of their old home in Ontario and of course, because wood and water were necessities for the early pioneers. Following this trend, John Harkness and his partner, George Kennedy, also purchased land along the creek (3-1-28) from George Rice and established their new home in a sod shack. George Kennedy died in 1895 and was buried at Winlaw, but John Harkness stayed on and later built a frame house.

### THE THOMPSONS

- Will Murray

Sometime in the 1880's, three brothers named Thompson arrived in this district, presumably from Ontario, and each took a homestead. George homesteaded the E½ of 34-1-28, Jim the S.W. of 35-1-28, and Sam the N½ of 27-1-28. All erected sod buildings, including house and barn. Will Murray tore down George Thompson's house when he took over the farm in 1916. This house had been built of logs with a heavy ridge pole and posts running the other way. These posts were covered with bark and both the walls and the roof were covered with sods. Jim Thompson's house was on the east side of the road and Sam's buildings were on the south side of the road on 27 where Pres Birds now

live. Sam's sod shacks were replaced by frame buildings about 1900.

These brothers bought a steam threshing machine early in the 1890's and hired a Mr. Rose to run it. They were extremely pleased with their choice of hired man! However, when the threshing season was over, they gave him money to make a payment on the threshing machine. That was the last ever seen of Mr. Rose or the money. This may have been one reason why my father was able to buy George Thompson's land from the mortgage company in 1897 after George's departure.

Sam and Jim Thompson got their wives through a practical joker, the late George Brown of Pierson, who lived on the Gardiner farm. Brown picked a name out of the "Loving Hearts" page of the newspaper and answered the lady, but signed Jim Thompson's name. Later he visited Jim's shack when Jim was absent, found an answering letter from her and answered it for Jim. Jim soon had occasion to meet the lady and later married her. Sam married her sister and both wives were splendid pioneer women.

Jim sold his land to Granny Murray in 1900 when he put up buildings west of the McMechan buildings. A few years later he moved to Portage la Prairie. Sam Thompson had a family of three small boys. Mrs. Thompson died suddenly in 1902, leaving motherless three small boys. Sam married again in 1906 and rented the farm to Jim Scott.

## JOHN WALTON

- *By Hazel Brown, Pierson*

Mrs. Walton, the former Lavina Campbell of Sussex, New Brunswick and John Walton of Murray Corner, New Brunswick, left for the west in March, 1889 to settled on N.E. of 24-2-25 (between Deloraine and Waskada on the old Boundary Commission Trail). Here they settled in a log and sod house, farmed and kept stoppers, who were en route from the far-flung parts of western Manitoba and eastern Northwest Territories by oxen and horse teams to their closest markets of Old Deloraine, Deloraine, Souris or Brandon. Many were the hazards of these trips and many were the travellers who were detained for several days by blizzards, floods, etc., but they always enjoyed the hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. Walton and their musical family. Johnnie and Lina played the violin, Amanda the organ and Mr. Walton sang a variety of humorous, sad, sacred, comic and sentimental songs which often contained as many as 30 stanzas.

After several crop failures and many disappointments, they moved to a homestead in the Lyleton district N.E. of 26-1-28 which is now owned by Mrs. Basil Miller and her son, Darryl (a great grandson of Mr. Walton, Sr.). They saw the coming of the railroad which ran through the farm, and also the founding of the village.

They took up residence in their little sod house and at once began making a home in the new district. The planting of fruit trees, strawberries, rhubarb, etc., was a great help as things were scarce at this time. Grampa Walton and his son Jack soon broke up the fertile sod which was free of stones. They purchased the adjoining quarter west as their pre-emption. Water was the greatest drawback-but with the help of sloughs and shallow wells, they managed until Jack bought the quarter north of the road where he was fortunate to

strike a good well.

In 1901 they abandoned their sad house for a new well-built, modern home, well heated with coal and wood. In 1903 a new hip-roofed barn was erected followed by granaries and implement sheds. Beautiful groves of trees were planted at this time, many of which are still standing. Good times and prosperity prevailed all the years they lived there.

I am sure the young folk (as they were then) never forgot Lyleton as they had so many good friends. They attended all social functions and took part in many. The whole Walton family was staunch supporters of the Presbyterian Church; Amanda was part-time organist for the new church founded in 1903 and Lina and Manda always sang in the choir. When I was a little child I remember Grandma turning down the light of her little green lamp and leaving it for the family who were away at choir practice. (I still have that little lamp.) Johnnie was a noted wrestler, cricket fan and an ardent ball player. He enjoyed many games of ball with the Lyleton boys some of whom were: Wilbur Gardiner, Jack and Frank Lee, Robert Murray's sons and Joe Lawrence.

In 1910 the young people with a "Go West" fever burning in them persuaded their very reluctant parents to move to Vancouver. Mr. Robert Dougall auctioneered their chattels. John and Grandpa Walton returned to farm from 1914 to 1916 but dry years met them. The land was rented to Messrs. Gilbertson, Dan Steinacker and James Raeside. Mr. Walton, Sr. had passed away in 1917 and John sold the land in 1921 to his brother-in-law, the late Harry Miller of Pierson, for his sons Emory and Basil.

Grandma Walton passed away in 1922 and all members of the family have been laid to rest since. Robert Walton (who homesteaded at the village of Antler, North Dakota) passed away in 1925 as did all members of his family except his wife, the former Sarah Fanning.

Adelia Walton married Harry Miller who farmed in the Deloraine-Waskada district on SE of 36-2-24 for three years. He moved to Pierson in 1896 to homestead on SE 22-2-29 where he continued to farm till his death in 1926, leaving a family of six survivors. Basil married Eva Fletcher and died in a dug-out accident in 1943. His one son, Darryl, at present farms the former Walton-Miller farm. Annie (Mrs. Jensen) passed away in 1964. Vesta (Mrs. Daniels), Hazel (Mrs. G. Brown), and Emory (still on his father's homestead and noted for his old-time fiddling ability) continue to reside in the Pierson area.

#### HENRY SPEARE

- *Lloyd Speare*

Henry Speare was born in Devonshire, England in 1846. In 1856 he immigrated to Canada with the rest of the family by sailing vessel by which they endured a voyage of eleven weeks. He learned the trade of his father, that of a hand spinner in a woollen mill. He served at that work in Ontario until he came west in 1887.

He came by train to the end of the line at Deloraine. After buying a yoke of oxen and cart of sorts, he headed west with his belongings to his homestead on section 10-1-29.

In May 1888 he was joined by Mrs. Speare and the six children: John, William, Raymond, Henry, David, Jeanette (Nettie). They took up residence in



*Henry Speare, Sr. - a stalwart pioneer of the Lyleton district.*

the sod house where another daughter, May, was born in 1889.

The family continued to live in the first sod house for approximately seven years until another larger one was built. The first one was then converted into a barn. The second house contained two good-sized bedrooms, a large living room, and a kitchen built along its side. Since it was dug down so that the windows were at ground level, it was claimed to be the warmest house they ever lived in. Among the furniture in the sod house was a piano around which neighbors and family gathered for much music and song.

The family lived in the sod house until 1900 when the big stone house was built. The stones were gathered from the surrounding land and the lumber



*The Henry Speares' stone house, built in 1900, and constaeææne most beautiful house for miles around",*

hauled by horse and wagon from Pierson. Anyone who sees this house can appreciate the amount of work which went into the building of it under the capable hands of the contractor, Oscar Knisley from Gainsborough. All the stones were squared by chipping and later carried by "hand up into place" right to the peak.

In November 1888 John went to work for Gould and Elliot who operated a store at Sourisford. His wages were \$10.00 per month there. William went to work for Joseph Henderson who farmed where Wes Kilfoyle lived. There is no record of his wages.

The land of this homestead was broken by ox team, then later with horses. The first tractor was purchased about 1924. Grain was hauled originally to the grist mill at Deloraine. The round trip required five days. Some of the neighbors freighted their grain to the grist mill at Bottineau.

Charlie Reid managed the first post office to which the mail was hauled from Pierson. Later Henry Speare delivered the mail to and from Lyleton and Pierson.

Henry Speare was also the superintendent of the first Sunday School organized at Lyleton. Ox-team and wagon was the mode of travel for his family every Sunday. During his last year he was superintendent of Copely Sunday School. This fine pioneer passed away in 1917.

#### JOSEPH HENDERSON

J.W. Henderson was a veteran of the Fenian raid. He and his wife Fanny with their four children: Clara, Emma, Jennie and Laura, arrived with the early pioneers to the Lyleton district to homestead S½ of 4-1-28 in 1885.

In the late 1880's the Hendersons settled on a farm four miles south of what is now Lyleton, where they built a sod house and started to farm. During the heavy rains, the sods leaked, and Grandfather Henderson thought it would help to turn the sods with the grass upward, and then the roof leaked more than ever, and there was a great scramble to place pans under the drip and to pull the beds from one area to another so the sleeping children would not get wet.

A few years later, the present frame house was built. Two more children were born to them, Edna and William. Brandon was the nearest town, and twice a year Joseph made the long trip by team and wagon for supplies and there was great excitement when he returned, as there was usually a bag of candy as a treat for the children.

Joseph was councillor in the original Arthur municipality and helped choose the names for Arthur and Edward municipalities at the time of the division. Later he was reeve of the Edward municipality for several years. He died in 1914 and was buried in the Lyleton cemetery.

Clara, the eldest girl, married James Ferguson Dandy and they settled at Pierson where he was one of the first merchants, operating a lumber yard, hardware store and undertaking business. In 1914, due to ill health, he left for a trip to England and was a passenger on the Empress of Ireland when it sank in the Gulf of St. Lawrence after being hit in the fog by another ship.

Emma married Bert Howes, a railroad man.

Jennie married George Hopwood, who had been a fireman in Winnipeg, and they purchased the farm directly across the road from the Henderson farm, bordering on the North Dakota boundary where they farmed until the death of Mr. Hopwood in 1941.

Laura married Thomas E. Brewster in 1900. He had come to Manitoba in 1898 from Ontario, and worked for some time on the farm of Philip Reekie, southwest of town, before purchasing his own farm three and one-half miles south of Lyleton, which was the half section just north of the Hopwood farm, on the South Antler Creek. For many years Tom had been a cattle buyer, and had taken shipments of cattle to Ontario and as far as England. He also served for several years on the Council for the Municipality of Edward, and was road commissioner for some years.

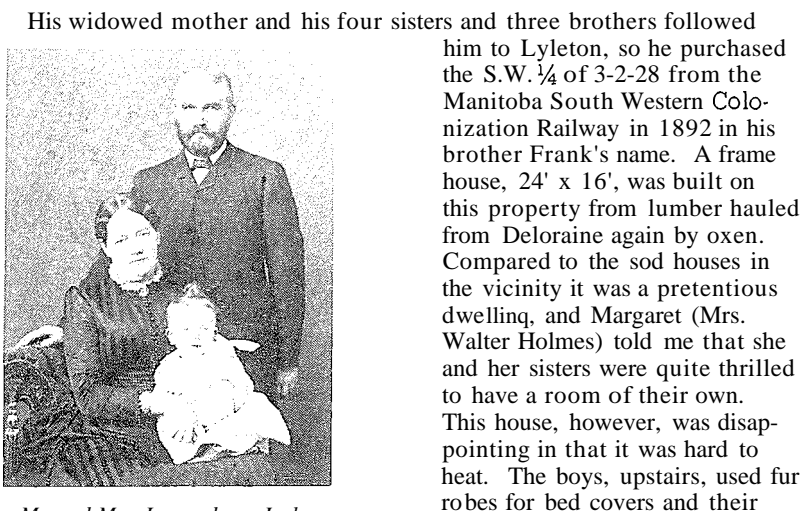
Edna married Ed Logan, whose family resided in the Antler, North Dakota, district.

Will Henderson, the only son, left the farm at an early age, and went to Calgary, Alberta, where he learned the tinsmithing business, and he worked there until World War I broke out, when he joined the army and served in France. On his return, he moved to Eugene, Oregon, where he carried on in the tinsmithing business until his death.

#### ERNEST LEE

- Mrs. Hector McNish

As a young man of 18, Ernest Lee came from Wales and homesteaded the N.W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of 25-1-28 and received his patent in the late 1880's. When he built his first sad buildings on his homestead, he had to haul the poles from south of Deloraine by oxen. Wheat had to be hauled to Brandon where supplies must be purchased for the winter.



Mr. and Mrs. Lee and son Jack.

him to Lyleton, so he purchased the S.W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of 3-2-28 from the Manitoba South Western Colonization Railway in 1892 in his brother Frank's name. A frame house, 24' x 16', was built on this property from lumber hauled from Deloraine again by oxen. Compared to the sod houses in the vicinity it was a pretentious dwelling, and Margaret (Mrs. Walter Holmes) told me that she and her sisters were quite thrilled to have a room of their own. This house, however, was disappointing in that it was hard to heat. The boys, upstairs, used fur robes for bed covers and their



breathing caused hoar frost to form on the covers during the cold winter nights.

The family continued to farm in the Lyleton district until 1922 when all, with the exception of Jack, moved west. In 1923 Mrs. Hector McNish bought the farm from Frank Lee and the McNish family moved in. Jack Lee then moved to Ernest's former homestead.

Ross and Garnet McNish, while playing among the trees in the former Lee houseyard, found a sad iron which had evidently been brought from Wales by Mrs. Lee. In the side of this iron was a drawer which pulled out to allow the setting of glowing embers to heat the iron.

The present owner of the former Lee homestead is Brian McNish.

### JAMES WINTHROPE

Adam Winthrope had come to the area in 1890 to homestead 30-1-29. The next year his father, James Winthrope and family of three sons and two daughters, joined him. The family consisted of Adam, George, Andrew, Paul, Margaret and Mary, of whom Paul and Margaret were in their teens.

They settled in the Copley district which at that time was considered part of the Winslaw district. James Winthrope took a homestead on the N.W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of 16-1-29, George on the east  $\frac{1}{2}$  of 16-1-29 and Andrew on the S.W. of 18-1-29.

Small sod buildings were erected on these two farms..but later, frame buildings appeared on S.E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of 16-1-29 where they all lived for some time.

They received their first mail at a farm house known as the Winslaw Post Office and I believe this was their first church. For the first few years Deloraine was their main source for supplies. Oxen was their only means of transportation and were also used in plowing with a one-furrow walking plow.

James Winthrope was killed by an angry bull in 1905 and Mrs. Winthrope continued to live with her daughter Margaret, Mrs. E.W. Line, on N.W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  16-1-29 until her death in 1924.

George Winthrope was blind most of his life following an accident in Ontario at a very early age. He soon turned his homestead over to his brother Andrew and lived the greater part of his life with his brothers in the Copley district where he passed away in 1944.

Andrew resided in the Copley district until 1948 when he retired to British Columbia. Adam finally moved to Detroit where he lived most of his years. Mary married John Tedford of the Winslaw district and moved to Alberta.

Paul went teaching and later studied dental work in which field he graduated from a Chicago university in 1908.

## ROBERT MURRAY

- *By Anne Murray and Jean Murray Borne*

Robert Murray was born near Hagersville, Ontario in 1856. His parents, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Murray, lived and farmed in Ontario, near a hamlet called "The Gore", which had a store, school, blacksmith shop, and a church. Mr. Andrew Murray died at the age of 44, leaving his wife, Isabel, to raise their eleven children alone, the youngest of whom was only four years old. Grandma left the farming to the boys while she contributed to the family income by making cheese and keeping bees for honey sales. As long as Grandma lived, she made yearly trips to Manitoba to visit her sons and daughters. When she died at the age of 81 in 1916 at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Burleigh White, the body was returned to the Gore cemetery to rest beside that of her husband.

Mother, Catherine White, was born of Irish and Pennsylvania Dutch parentage. (Her father, Grandpa White, was a shoemaker by trade and mended all our shoes and often made them when we were children.) Mother took Normal School training after securing her Third Class Teacher's certificate at the age of 16. She taught the Gore School with well over 100 pupils, many of whom were older than their teacher. Father lost his heart to the "Gore" school teacher and they were married at Hagersville in 1880 and then rented farms in Brant Country.



*Mr. and Mrs. Robert Murray.*

Andrew, Lorinda, Richard, Jean and Baird were born to this union in Ontario. Jean and Baird were born at "Injun Bush" where one of the midwives was a fine educated, intelligent Indian woman.

The Robert Murrays immigrated to Manitoba with this family in 1890 to settle near the Whites who had arrived in 1883. In the spring of '90, Father travelled with a load of settlers' effects which included their livestock, machinery, furniture, and all their household possessions. The owner rode in the

freight car with his stock in order to feed and water them during the journey which usually took more than week. Andrew, aged nine, accompanied Father and from that time on, did a man's work.

They shipped to Deloraine which was the end of the line where they were met by Mother's brother, George White, and his friend, Archie Beaton. These two young men had walked the entire forty miles (which was not considered a great distance at that time.) On the trip home, however, all rode either on horseback or on the wagons.

Homesteads in the Lyleton District were all taken up by this time and Father, with a family of five, preferred to purchase land among friends and relatives rather than move further west for available homesteads. The original homestead of Sam Seiffert, 22-1-28, was available for purchase as Sam had moved south into North Dakota to homestead again.

There was a small frame house on the farm with sod leanto kitchen. In this kitchen was a long bunk bed for use by the older boys which folded up into a seat in the daytime. When it rained or when the snow melted in the springtime, the ceiling, lined with white cotton, leaked; pots and pans were kept handy to catch the drips. One pleasing feature about the sad building was the deep window seat where small children could sit and play out of the way of busy mothers. During the winter the windows would have inches of frost, thick enough to write or draw on, but when it melted off, many puddles were left! The upstairs portion of the frame part was so low that the bedsteads had to be cut down to fit into the slope under the eaves. Since there was only the heater pipe to give warmth, we often wore coats, hoods and stockings and used hot irons to warm the beds on cold winter nights.

Mother was not too happy on the trip west which took about a week. There were no berths then, so passengers sat up day and night. With three small children and a 10-month-old baby (Baird) and no way to wash and dry diapers, her trip west was less than First Class! Uncle James, however, accompanied her to make it easier.

The country through New Ontario looked so bleak in March that Mother began to wonder about this new land. On the other hand she was happy to be going to live so near her parents and brothers, and both Mother and Father had looked forward to being landowners. For many years after coming west, Father's ambition was to make enough money to return to Ontario and purchase the old family home at the Gore. By the time he could afford this, they were wedded to the west as it truly was the land of promise. Father encouraged his Ontario relatives to come to this new country where everyone had an equal chance to become landowners and prosperous citizens.

In 1890 Father was able to harvest a crop which had to be marketed 40 miles away at Deloraine. The grain had to be shovelled into bags and loaded onto the wagons in the evening. In early morning the wagon teams would begin the long haul which required a whole day. Usually more than one sleigh or wagon travelled together so that the men could assist one another if one got stuck or upset. Moses Little often drew grain to the market with Father. Upon returning home, the men undressed in the granary, changed into clean clothes from the skin out as there was always the chance that they had picked up lice or bed-bugs where they had stayed overnight. The worn clothing then had to be tub-washed

before being brought to the house. As Father had horses, he often hauled grain for neighbors who owned only oxen for breaking.

The big event of our family in the early years was our visits to Grandfather White's at Christmas and on special occasions. We were all bundled into the sleigh and it was no small task to find enough warm clothing for the entire family.

Mother told of many hardships in the early days on the prairie. But her stories also recalled many happy occasions when the neighbors gathered for house warmings or work "bees" which proved a warm welcome to many newcomers. Storms, especially hail storms or blizzards, was another constant danger. Mother told of the time she and Aunt Jennie Murray were in our house when a terrific windstorm swept across the open prairie. The women couldn't hold the outside door shut, so they pushed a barrel of sugar against it. At the same time, Andrew and Dick were returning from a visit to Grandpa White's when the wind struck then. They lay down and hung on to the long grass in the ravine.

As the years went by, the family was increased by Anne, Will, Cecil and Ramona. Grandma White was in attendance on Mother when Will was born in the dead of winter when a six-weeks' blizzard raged. Father told of shovelling snow through the roof of the sod stable to give the cattle moisture during this six-week blizzard. When it cleared and the drifts were shovelled away, the stock disdainfully refused to drink well water in the trough-snow was good enough for them!

When Cecil was born, a neighbor, Mrs. John Woolsley, who lived south of Aim Lyle's, was in attendance. That event was in May and the ravine creek was too high for her to wade. Father waded across and carried Mrs. Woolsley across-aU180 pounds.

Wild fruit was plentiful if you could stand the mosquitoes but commercial fresh fruit was not available. Father once bought a few green apples from Melita, which were cut into quarters and divided among us-no cores were left! Grandma Murray used to ship us a barrel of apples after she found out about conditions. Boxes of dried apples with jars of honey embedded tightly among the apples also were a wonderful surprise. Mother could remake the out-grown or discarded dresses which were shipped in the clothing bundles. The cottonade from which we made the boys' pants was stiff and hard to handle, while the unbleached cotton used for the girls' undies was just about as stiff. Jennie Bowlby used to crochet lace for us. She would work up a spool of thread and her pay was another spool of thread which cost five cents at that time. Print was bought by dozens of yards for dresses, aprons, sunbonnets and boys' shirts. Once when Father and Uncle Will took a load of pork to Bottineau to sell, they had to take a bolt of print as part payment. That summer we were all dressed in the same pattern, while Aunt Martha used the material inside out so that the cousins "looked different from the Murray kids."

When we came to the country, there was no school in the district, as there had not been enough children to form a school district. Andrew attended school at South Antler one year and at North Antler the next where he boarded with the Joseph Holmes family. Loie was sent east for schooling where she was called Laura. However, upon her return, it was not long before we all re-

verted to the familiar "Loie". Dick was sent back the next year for his schooling. When he was returning west with Granny Murray, they were in a train wreck. The car in which they were riding was demolished but they were not injured. Dick came home loaded with souvenirs of slats from the shutters of the windows. These slats we used for rulers at school. Jean and Baird also had a turn to go back east with Father. One of their memories is that of happily eating apple peelings in the kitchen. The aunts were shocked nearly to tears that these "little dears were so desperate for fruit." They did not realize that all prairie children enjoyed the treat of the apple peelings when a pie was being made, as any portion of the fruit was precious.

When the White School opened in 1894, Baird and Jean started together. Of course, Mother, being a teacher, had taught us at home, so Baird began in the first grade and Jean in the second. Loie and Dick also attended during the first year. The school house was not quite completed when opening day came, so for a short time we held school in the new sad stable which had not been used and which smelled of new mown hay.

Among the first boys to start school was Sampson Green whose parents homesteaded on the creek just below Aim Lyle's farm along with the earliest pioneers, the Reekies and the Whites. Once Sampson came to school smelling horribly of skunk. He and his mother had killed a skunk the night before in the leanto kitchen of their sad house where it had been attempting to catch the chickens which roosted in the kitchen. He was forced to remain home for several days since there was no money to purchase new clothing and it took several washings to remove the odor from his body and clothes.

One of our favorite childhood friends was Angelo Butler a brother of Mrs. Andy Lyle. He had the only gramophone in the district and was most generous with it by inviting us all to come in any evening to enjoy the records which were circular wax tubes. The machine had long tubes with tiny ear-phones which you plugged into your ears and listened carefully to the music. There has never been another gramophone like it before or since in our opinion! Mr. Butler was a little baldheaded bachelor who was very kind to all the neighboring children.

Before the town of Lyleton appeared, the post office was in Andy Lyle's home to which Father carried the mail every Saturday from Pierson through storms and over bad roads. Later the post office was moved to our farm home where it remained until moved to Father's office in Lyleton. There Father remained as postmaster for many years. The post office on the farm brought much company to pick up the mail on Saturdays. Many people came early and played baseball in the pasture south of the house or croquet in the yard. No one ever hurried away as mail day offered a weekly opportunity for a visit with friends.

With the growth of the town, Father started a lumber yard, wrote insurance, and bought grain. For a time, a Mr. Marshall was his partner in the lumber yard followed by Sam Sadler from Glenboro and later by Andrew.

Our first small house on the farm was gradually enlarged as the family increased. There were eleven regular beds in the house and during harvest when we had many hired men, beds were set up in the granary or in the caboose of the threshing outfit.

The harvesters ate huge meals owing to the long hours, hard work, and the change in climate. Jean Murray at the age of sixteen cooked for the Murray-Venton outfit. She began with an assistant newly-arrived from the east who played out after two days. Mr. Venton thought that five dollars a week was too much pay for a girl of that tender age. There was, however, always a man to move the cook car, fetch water and do errands for the cook. That year it was the Venton farm manager, John Dodds, a fine gentleman who later purchased a farm in Saskatchewan and resides today at Indian Head.

We had a variety of hired men over the years. One of these 'was Tom Bonner who was hired at a price set by the yield. If the wheat averaged twenty bushels to the acre, he would receive twenty dollars a month. Most of the hired men worked for their board in the winter, sharing family life with the family. Many of the first hired men took up land and became prosperous farmers.

Father and Mother were both community-minded pioneers, and were instrumental in promoting a church, a school, and anything that benefited the district. Faithful attendants were they at church with all members of their family and the hired help. Father served on the Lyleton Church Board until his death in 1937. He was trustee of both the White School and the Village school. The beauty spot of Lyleton, the park, was suggested by Father who saw the need for trees for beauty, shelter belts, and for snow retention and was one of the first to plant trees in rows on the farm. The first trees in front of our house on the farm grew from maple seeds which Mother had brought from the east.

Mother, too, played her part in the church and Sunday School and was the first president of the Women's Missionary Society which was organized in 1913. At the time of her death at the age of 92, she was superintendent of the United Church Baby Band. Mother was also called in the case of illness or death. She officiated at scores of births, usually without the service of a doctor or a nurse. Dr. Morrison of Pierson was for years the only available doctor and was called only in the event of serious illness or death. In the case of a funeral, Mother and some of the local women "laid out" the body without the formality of a medical certificate.

After the town started to develop, Father still lived on the farm and drove daily to town, first with horse and buggy. Father was the first purchaser



*R. Murray's Ford car-first car in the district, 1911. Mr. and Mrs. R. Murray, Mrs. Burleigh White, Mr. and Mrs. George White and Larry.*

of a car in the district which he drove out from Winnipeg. It had carbon brass lamps and was built high with side fenders. The car looked not unlike a buggy with brass lamps mounted high in the sky and scared many horses and caused many runaways.

Father stayed on the farm until 1919 when Cecil returned from service overseas in World War I. Father, Mother and Anne moved into town as Anne was already working in the post office. Cecil married Alice Lyle and raised a family of seven on the old farm. He moved to town to operate the lumber yard and his son, Keith continues to farm the original Murray farm where a new house was moved into in 1965. Son Ivan farms Dick Murray's original farm and Glen is on the old Harkness place.

Andrew left to homestead at Aneroid in 1909 and remained there for 50 years. He married Emily Switzer and they raised four children. For the last ten years of his life he was blind and spent the winters in the Home for the Blind in Regina. During this time he soon achieved provincial acclaim by writing "Recollections of Life in Three Provinces" to record the history of the Robert Murray family. References have been made throughout this book to his publication for verification and "on-the-spot" reporting. Andrew was laid to rest in the Lyleton cemetery in 1967.

Loie married Ernest Lyle and passed away in 1912, leaving two young sons who were cared for by the Murray grandparents until they moved to Winnipeg. Willie died after an appendectomy in 1916 and Robert passed away 1959 after being released from Ninette Sanitorium.

Richard married Elva Hutchison and farmed west of Lyleton. After operating a garage in Lyleton, he purchased a garage in Oak River. Many tales are told of Dick and his practical jokes and his stories. His family consisted of one daughter, Anna. Dick passed away in 1966 after several years of ill health.

Jean married bank manager Earlton Bourne after working for nine years in Lyleton post office. Following their marriage, they moved to Saskatchewan and are now living in Regina and enjoying visits with their son, daughter and grandchildren.

Baird took a business course in Winnipeg during the winter of 1908-09 in the Success Business College. In 1914 Father gave him the S $\frac{1}{2}$  of 27-1-28. This land was low and had many sloughs and clumps of trees which was considered unattractive for farming so was left when the land around was homesteaded or bought. Albert Linton had bought it in the early 1900's from the railroad for \$3.00 per acre. The railroad cut across the south quarter of this half. The old farm in Ontario was cut the same way by the railroad and the community had called it the "Gore". In memory of this, Baird called his farm on which his son Jim lives today "The Gore Farm". A school teacher, Laura Davidson, became his bride in 1915 and they raised five children successfully. Baird was buried in Lyleton Cemetery in 1944.

Ramona, youngest of the nine, died after an appendectomy operation in 1917 at the age of 20.

Anne, the third daughter, remained single and looked after her parents in their old age. She served as an assistant postmistress in Lyleton 1917-37, then

as postmistress until her retirement in 1957. Her nephew, Robert Lyle, was appointed to fill this position until his death in 1959 when the post office operation, after more than 65 years, passed out of Murray hands. Anne continues to live in the original town house of her parents and serves the church and community as faithfully as ever.

William married Jean Switzer and after raising six daughters and farming successfully, they retired to Lyleton into the house formerly owned by Burleigh White. Two of the daughters, Mary McNish and Evelyn Bird, reside in the Lyleton district and like their parents, are active members of the community. Evelyn and Pres Bird farm the home farm. Jean has not enjoyed good health for several years, but Will still remains active.

Our parents' courageous pioneering may be summed up by: "Through summer's heat and winter's snow, they builded better than they knew."

#### JOSEPH DANN

— *"The Deloraine Times"*

Joseph Dann was born in Peterborough, Ontario and came west in 1890 to the Lyleton district where his parents homesteaded along the Antler River on 36-1-29. Butterfield, the first post office west of Sourisford, was located there. Later the family moved to Deloraine and farmed in the Thirlstone district where his son Clarence now resides. In 1909 he married Mary Ann Hammel who predeceased him in 1965. Mr. and Mrs. Dann for many years were active members of the United Church. Joseph Dann passed away in 1967 and is mourned by three sons and two daughters.

#### MR. AND MRS. MOSES LITTLE

- *Jessie Little*

In 1882 Moses Little and Gus. Sefort had come from Winnipeg to the end of the line at Brandon together. They had then walked from Brandon to Boissevain to file their claims to their homesteads.

Mr. Little started farming as a bachelor with only one team of horses, but later became interested in raising percherons. Feeling that they required rest after a hard day in the field, he would walk the five miles for his bread. The price for this bread was "a bag for a bag"; that is, he would buy a bag of flour for himself and hire a woman to bake his bread in return for a second bag of flour which she used in baking her own bread.

By 1891 the railway had reached Deloraine and in March 1891 Moses Little and Jessie McLean of Port Elgin, Ontario, exchanged marriage vows. After the ceremony, they travelled by wagon a distance of over forty miles to the homestead of Lyleton. In this "new country", Mrs. Little found the people sociable.

Rev. McKay Omand, the first minister, resided in Elva before the village of Lyleton was established. Every Sunday, summer and winter, he drove fifteen miles to hold a church service in the little white school. Once, when he was sick, his wife, a clever woman, drove the fifteen miles and conducted the service herself.





*Mr. and Mrs. Moses Little in 1885.*

In the fall of 1903, Rev. Omand opened the new Presbyterian Church now the United Church of Canada, in Lyleton. Mr. and Mrs. Little were staunch church members; Mr. Little had been on the Board of Managers for years, and had helped to make plans for the building of the new church.

It wasn't until 1902 that the railroad reached Lyleton. As it came closer and closer, Mr. Little hauled his grain shorter and shorter distances. At first he had teamed it to Boissevain, later to Deloraine, Napinka, Melita and Pierson, as the tracks were laid. Finally, in 1903, he hauled grain to Lyleton which was situated on the same section of land as his farm.

Three daughters were born to this union. Margaret (Maqqie), the eldest, died at the age of eight, and May, the youngest, in infancy. A frame house had been erected in 1899 and a large barn in 1905. Mr. and Mrs. Little retired from the farm in 1924 and resided in Lyleton until their passing in 1939 and 1928 respectively.

Miss Jessie Little is the sole survivor of the Little family. As chief telephone operator, she served her community well. Having been employed by the Manitoba Telephone System for forty-one years, she retired in 1959.

Mr. and Mrs. Little are remembered as good, honest people who worked hard to build a home. They admired their neighbors for their industry,



*The little farmhouse built in 1899 and the barn in 1905.*

their courage and their hope for the future. All had hardships to endure, all helped each other in time of need, and all became part of a fine community. From the neighborly spirit that prevailed in those early days of settlement, springs the friendliness that characterizes modern Lyleton and prompts visitors and newcomers alike to say, "It is a nice town!"

#### MR. AND MRS. ROBERT WRIGHT

- *Ben Wright (Devils Lake, North Dakota)*

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Wright with seven children left Ontario in March 1891; Mother with six children came by passenger train while Dad and the eldest shipped by freight with an immigrant car along with six horses, some lumber and machinery.

We, the passenger folk, got into Deloraine on a Saturday evening and stayed over Easter Sunday in Deloraine until Dad and Jim arrived in Deloraine on Monday. We came out to what then called the Billie Sherif farm about three miles west of Sourisford where we found buildings of a sort. We farmed that place that year and Dad hauled the crop to Melita as the road had gone through that summer.

Next spring, March 1892, we moved to North Dakota just at the border south of where Lyleton later was established. The next night after we got settled, the Antler Creek flooded to the tops of its banks and no crossing was done for a few weeks as there was not a bridge anywhere along the creek. On the North Dakota side there were James Schell, Duncan McLean, the Siefferts, and the Mannings a little farther west.

I remember when the older boys were moving our goods to North Dakota, I went along on one trip and stopped off at the Robert Murray farm while the lads went over and unloaded. I can remember Andrew who was a year older than I and Dick who was a little younger. That year, along the Canadian side were the A.W. Reekies with very young children, P.B. Reekie with several children a little older. Joe Henderson and several of his family just east of us, Sam Lyle was on his home farm and Andrew Lyle on the creek where he ran the P.O. for several years before it moved to the Robert Murray farm.

Many I knew seventy years ago have passed away. Of the Wright family of seven, only George, Ben, Hugh and Corrie (Mrs. John Milligan, Big River) remain. I extend my greetings to the offspring of those worthy pioneers of Lyleton.

#### JAMES BAIRD MURRAY

- *Isabel Pateman*

James Baird Murray, born at the Gore, Ontario, in 1860 and Jennie Hunter also born at the Gore, were married in 1888. In 1889 they had a daughter Ethel, born in a stone house. In 1891 they went west by train to Deloraine where they were met by Robert Murray and were conveyed to Lyleton where they homesteaded on the N.W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of 22-1-28. By 1895 they had built a sad house and barn, in the sod house a son, Andrew was born. This house and barn were built on the S.W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of 22-1-28.



*Mr. and Mrs. James Murray. Notice Mrs. Murray's fashionable fan.*

By 1900 they had a two-storey frame house built where daughter Isabel was born.

At that time, James Murray told the C.P.R. if they would build the Town of Lyleton on the N.W. corner of 22-1-28, he would give them the land free, but they did not accept the offer and built three-quarters of a mile west.

James Murray built an implement shed in Lyleton and took over the franchise for the International Harvester Co. in the Lyleton district from Cameron and Duncan of Melita and operated the same along with his farm.

He also raised and exhibited Border Leicester sheep. By about 1903 his herd of sheep had gone down to 17 head because of wolves. He traded the sheep to a butcher in Pierson for a colt which turned out to be a very good pacer and won considerable prizes at the races. He was very active at the game of curling and had been to Winnipeg Bonspiel the winter before the advent of his failing health.

In the spring of 1903 he went to Chicago with Ed Gardiner and bought a percheron and a coach stallion. By the time they arrived back at Pierson, the percheron stallion was sick and had to be kept in Pierson livery barn until it recovered. James slept in the stall with the horse. Walter Murray kept the percheron at his farm and James kept the coach.

In the issue of July 5, 1905 of the *Nor West Farmer* appears the following item: "It is our painful duty to record the death of James Murray of Lyleton, Manitoba who has been in failing health for some time. Mr. Murray has been long and well known in the showing of the Winnipeg Industrial as a successful exhibitor of Border Leicester sheep. As long as he was in the field, he was seldom known to leave without a lion's share of the honors. He had no superior in the west as a fitter of sheep for the show, what had been once through his hands needed no finishing touch. He was a kindly and obliging gentleman a favorite among his brother breeders, and he will be much missed

by a wide circle of friends. "

Jennie Murray carried on the farm operations and was always ready to help the sick and needy at a time when there were few doctors and nurses. She was also a good and generous cook although she was unable to eat heartily for several years.

She left the farm in 1926 to stay with her son and daughters until her death in 1940.

James Murray's family married and only Andy and Isobel survive today. Ethel married Frank Lang and passed away in 1954, Andy married Verlie Morrison and Isobel married Ernie Pateman and was widowed in 1945.

### JAMES FRANKLIN CLARK

- Mrs. Laura Murray

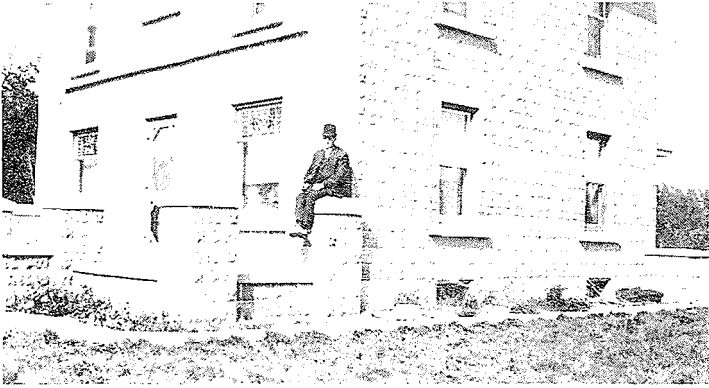


*James Franklin Clark and son, Franklin.*

James Franklin Clark was born in 1872 in Township Oneida Caledonia and married Mary Alice Hewson at Hagersville in 1903. Mr. Clark came west on harvest excursions in 1892 and 1893 and worked around Wawanese. He returned in the spring of 1894 and while working for various farmers in the Lyleton area, he acquired N.E. 23-1-28 (west of G.O. Fletcher's buildings). With a horse and three oxen he then did some breaking. Alf Leach had the land across the road, but had no buildings. So Messrs. Clark and Leach built a shack on the Clark land.

About 1895 J.F. Clark acquired the present home site of S.W. 26-1-28 and worked it from Section 23 for a few years before he built a frame house on 26 (which A.B. Murray later bought and moved to town). The present cement block house was erected in 1909 while the first stock barn was built in 1907.

Mr. Clark's brother, Jack, came from Ontario in 1900. As a carpenter he had a lumber yard in partnership with Sam Saddler about the location of the Patterson Elevator House.



*The cement block house 011 26-1-28 built in 1909.*

The family included: George Harvey Clark, who lives on the home farm and married Phyllis Mallow of Coulter, Hewson Robert Clark married Dorothy Mallow of Coulter and lives on the former R. Stinson farm. John Franklin married Phyllis Davies, an English war bride, and lives northwest of Melita. Both Hewson and Franklin served as radar mechanics in the World War II.

Mr. Clark was a good community worker and served on the Lyleton School Board for a number of years. His ability as a carpenter was put to good use throughout the district. The task of building of both the community rink and the hall were under his supervision. His story telling and experiences produced much laughter in the community which held him in high esteem.

#### WALTER MURRAY, SR.

- Gladys (Murray) Hall

In 1895 my father, Walter Murray, came west to this district where his brothers Robert and Jim had already located. At this time Father acquired the land that is known as N.W. 14-1-28. He went back east that fall, and the following spring Father and Mother (the former Aggie Peart) and myself (Gladys), then a very wee girl, left our home at the Gore near Hagersville, Ontario. With our carload of settlers' effects, we eventually arrived at Napinka, Manitoba, at that time the end of the railroad. Father took our mattress out of the car, and we spent our first night in the west, on that mattress on the floor of the waiting room of the C.P.R. Station at Napinka.

Our carload of settlers' effects included an Ayrshire cow, which later that summer gave birth to twin heifer calves. A horse and buggy which Father took from the car the following morning, and we loaded up what we could, and set out from Uncle Jim's place, S.W. 22-1-28. It was a cold drive in the early spring with snow still on the ground, but we arrived at Uncle Jim's in time for late supper. We made our home with Uncle Jim and Aunt Jennie and family, all summer. Father got some crop planted and began building a house using the lumber he had brought in the carload. By fall we moved into our new home. Father also managed to build a sad stable for his livestock before winter set in. We were very fortunate in getting a good well near the house. Before long, Father bought the west half of 23-1-28.



*Walter Murray and Miss Aggie Peart on their wedding day.*

The following years were busy ones. The railroad was soon extended to Pierson. Father marketed his grain there. This meant getting loaded the previous evening, having the morning chores done, and setting out for Pierson by daylight. We haven't forgotten the sound of the wagon wheels crunching in the frost and snow, as Father drove away with his loads of grain. We did our buying in Pierson in those early days, and there were five little ones to be fed: Gladys, Isobel, Henrietta, Vern and Walter. Mother did the sewing for us all, as well as for some of the neighbors, and baked good homemade bread for us as well as for the bachelors who lived nearby. Mr. Frank Clark was one of the bachelors.

Before long Grandma Peart came from Ontario to make her home with us. She brought lovely raw fruits with her. What a wonderful treat for us all!

At this time an addition was built to the house, and the old cook house was dismantled.

The first school was  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles southwest of our home, and was the meeting place for school, church and social get-togethers. Rev. Omand was the pioneer minister residing at Elva, the railroad stop. He travelled on the prairie trail that passed our place, and Mother made it a point to have lunch for him, as he went by. On one occasion, Mother burned an old pair of shoes to get the kettle boiling more quickly, and Rev. Omand with a twinkle in his eyes, often referred to the woman who burned her shoes to make a cup of tea for the minister.

After the turn of the century, our present church and manse was built, and Rev. and Mrs. Omand moved to Lyleton to make their home.

A peddler with a pack on his back was a common sight in those early days. We were afraid of peddlers. I remember one in particular who was dis-

pleased with us for not buying his wares. As he left, he spat on the kitchen window. They seemed to disappear after the arrival of the railroad in 1902.

Father was very interested in good horses. He and Mr. M. Little brought several outstanding Percheron sires into the Lyleton district.



*The prize percherons and imported sires owned by Mr. Walter Murray.*

Father and Mother continued to live on the farm until 1927, and then moved to town, built a new home and settled in it in the fall of 1928.

In the year 1937 Father passed away in his 72nd year. Mother had reached her 93rd year when she was taken in May, 1966.

#### JAMES EDWIN COWDEN

- Eva (Cowden) McColeman

Among the early settlers in the Lyleton area was James Edwin Cowden, a young man who came west from Bluevale, Ontario at about twenty-one years of age, in 1896.

He worked for a time on the farm of Mr. Philip Reekie, southwest of Lyleton, and later bought the quarter section of land known as 5-1-27.

Elizabeth Ringler, a girlhood sweetheart, came from Ontario to marry Ed Cowden and join the pioneer women of the area. Two children were born to the Cowdens: Harold Andrew, in 1903, and Eva Verona, in 1905.

After Ed Cowden's death from appendicitis in 1905, the farm was sold to Mr. George White. The quarter-section is still owned by the White brothers.

Following Mr. Cowden's death, Mrs. Cowden and her two small children travelled with Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Cunnings and their family to take up land in a new area just opening up near what is now Kerrobert, Saskatchewan.

(Mr. Cunnings had been in the bakery business in Lyleton). In a small frame house on the virgin prairie land in Saskatchewan, Mrs. Cowden began pioneering all over again.

## THE BREAKKEYS

"Melita Enterprise", April 7, 1897, stated,

"Every train brings in new arrivals. Messrs. Breakey Bros. and Stewart came on Tuesday's train from Toronto with three carloads of horses and settlers' effects."

Jottings from a letter from Iva Breakey discloses that Mrs. Breakey came west a year after Mr. Breakey and stayed at Will Breakey's Boarding House in Pierson. Mr. Breakey moved a two-storey house from Pierson and Breakeys where the first inhabitants on the farm. There were no trees around the buildings until Mr. and Mrs. Breakey planted nine rows of maple trees.

"There was a water shortage in the early days so we used slough water in summer and melted snow in the winter. Later, we had a wonderful spring well located half a mile from the buildings and it was also used by many of the neighbors.

Mr. Billy Tooke of Pierson built (to our house) an addition which included a kitchen and pantry with a huge bedroom over the kitchen for the hired help (who came from Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and Ontario, if I remember correctly). I believe that Mr. Pitt built the barn.

Our basement had earthen floor which was cool for all foods in summer. Milk was put in shallow pans and cream was skimmed off for making butter. Pork was salted and stored in crocks; eggs were stored in barley or other grains or in salt. Beef and other frozen foods were stored in boxes outside, in winter; fish was packed in ice and stored in the same way. Eggs and butter were bartered for groceries and thread, print and wearing apparel. Flour bags were bleached and used for pillow cases.

Will and I went to school together. Mother pulled me part way on a wagon as I was only five and Will would not go without me."

## ERNEST ADKINS PEARCE

- *By Robert Pearce*

Ernest Pearce was born at Stratton-on-the-Foss in England. He arrived in Canada in the 1890's and worked for Alf Venton (where Jim Pateman now lives), for James Murray (where Ollie Pateman now lives), and for George Lyle (land now owned by Gordon Tingey). He left for central Saskatchewan to homestead but returned in six months. While working for Bob Harmon in 1906, he married Oramina Harmon who was then employed in the Pierson Hotel. As a great horse lover, she will be remembered for the many prizes which she captured when she raced (always side-saddle). She passed on in 1925.

Ernest Pearce began to farm for himself in 1914 on a quarter section



originally owned by Mr. Tyler and later by Jim Miller who left to live in British Columbia.

The frame farm house had wooden floors. Coal oil lamps supplied the lights and a coal heater the warmth. Like most farmers in the area, the Pearces killed their own beef or later belonged to the beef ring to which each week someone would donate a beef. Tom Fletcher who was in charge, would then cut it up and portion it equally to the other members.

Dry salt was used to preserve meats and grain was milled at the grist mills located at Deloraine, Melita or Westhope. Homemade remedies and preventatives included mustard or bread poultices, doses of sulphur and molasses, Watkins liniments and Zambuck salves. Toys were usually homemade-children devoted much time to catching gophers and raiding crows' nests as a bounty of one or two cents could be acquired for each gopher tail and crew's egg. This wealth was spent on sports equipment usually.

In 1948 a frame house was built and trees were set out on the home quarter-there were only 20 rod rows of trees at first. A dugout was also constructed on the home quarter.

Mr. Pearce helped to load the first car of grain out of Lyleton and helped to build the first church. The first minister, Rev. Ornard, married Ernest Pearce and Ruth Achison from Scotland in 1930.

There were four children by the first marriage, one daughter died in 1908; the second daughter died in 1915, Robert farms the home place where his father still resides with Mrs. Pearce, and Dorothy is Mrs. Clayton Ashley.

## GEORGE LEACH

- *E/len Fletcher*

Mr. J.L. Campbell, cousin of George Leach, was located at Melita and purchased the N.W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of 24-1-28 pre-emption for James Leach, George's father. In 1898 George Leach arrived by train from Duntroon, Ontario to join Mr. Campbell. Frank Clark was hired to break 40 acres on the west side of the quarter in 1898. George Leach was employed that year on a farm north of Melita, owned by Mr. Terrance.

In the spring of 1899 Alf Leach, George's brother, came from Ontario with a carload of settlers' effects. This included horses, machinery and enough lumber to construct a small one-room shack. The furniture consisted of a bed, table, stove and a small cupboard which had been made by J.L. Campbell's brother, Will. (The cupboard is still in use in our home). They purchased the S.W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of 24-1-28 from Johnson brothers and remained together for five years.

During the slack time, Alf Leach herded cattle for Mr. La Port east of Westhope. They used to herd the cattle along the Souris River and drove them to Minot to ship. It was on one such drive that Alf was thrown when his horse slipped on ice and he was left with a permanently stiff knee.

During the winter the neighboring men used to gather at George and Alf Leach's shack to play cards until chore time. The card games involved:

Frank Clark, Walter Murray, Burleigh White and the three Lawrences (Jim, Joe and Jack).

After 1904 Alf Leach left the Lyleton district to homestead at Colfax, Saskatchewan, but his injured knee forced him to abandon this and to return to Ontario.

George Leach batched for a few years until his sister Mary came from Ontario to join him where she remained for twelve years. Mary Leach was the last organist at the stone church in the Copley district.

George Leach married Margaret Morrison from Duntroon, Ontario in 1919. Before her marriage, Margaret Morrison was the assistant station agent at Duntroon.

After construction of the shack and small stable, the granary was erected and is the oldest building still standing. The house was built around 1907.

Mr. and Mrs. George Leach both passed away in 1943, leaving two daughters: Jean, Mrs. Earl Fletcher of the Coultervale district, and Ellen, Mrs. George O. Fletcher, residing on the home farm.

#### THE C.A. CHALMERS FAMILY

My father, C.A. Chalmers, commonly known as Chris, came from Smiths Falls, Ontario, to Pierson in the spring of 1898. In 1903 he married Jean Ballantyne, also of Smiths Falls. There are four children in the family: Foster, of Winnipeg; Allan, of Kitchener, Ontario; Elliott and his wife Sadie on the home farm; and Alice of Winnipeg.

Father first farmed four miles east of Pierson but in 1902 sold that quarter-section and bought the S $\frac{1}{2}$  of 20-2-28 W.P.M. from Sam Poyner. Mr. Poyner had acquired these quarters through homesteading and had built a frame house and barn. North Antler school district had been organized so when father moved to this farm in 1902, he became settled in part of the North Antler district. Throughout their lives, both our parents took an active part in the community and church affairs.

He used to tell us of the hurry to get out west from Smiths Falls in the spring of 1898 and to get an outfit together and get some breaking done during the first summer. He started out with a breaking plow and oxen this first year and had yet to learn that the flies were bad on the prairie and the only way oxen could get relief from these pests was to stand in a slough with water well up around them. He would hitch the oxen to the breaking plow in the morning and later in the day, when the flies became particularly bad, nothing would stop them from getting into the nearest slough, plow and all. As a consequence, breaking was slow and arduous.

In 1912 he bought the N $\frac{1}{2}$  of this section 20-2-28 W.P.M., from Charles Elgar. Mr. Elgar had acquired it from the original homesteaders, Campbell and Doakes. There was some breaking and a granary on the land. I remember hearing the price-it was \$30.00 per acre.

The family lived in the original buildings built by Mr. Poyner until 1914. In 1914 and 1915 the house was completely rebuilt and extensive work done on the barn. This rebuilding was done by Jack Pitt of Pierson and his crew of carpenters, plus the Morrow brothers of Melita, who did the brickwork.

About this time, George Barrows bought the first automobile in the immediate district. It was a Ford with a brass radiator, leather straps from the windshield to the fenders. It was high and had outside hand controls on the driver's side. One day, Mr. Barrows drove into our yard in his new automobile and asked my father and me if we would like a ride. We climbed in, and drove down the land to the main road at what seemed like whirlwind speed which, I suppose, was 20 or 25 miles per hour. Until that time, unless you walked or rode horseback, transportation was by buggy and wagon in the summer and by cutter and sleigh in the winter.

There was considerable exchange of work between the neighbors, and of lending and borrowing of equipment. Steam threshing outfits were owned by several neighbors and threshed for themselves and seven or eight of the neighboring farms. Our family owned one with the Howard Riddells and Frank Boyles and threshed for eight to ten farms in all. It was not until 1921 and 1922 that tractors began to appear in any number. With the coming of tractors, small separators became available and the old steam outfits began to break up and disappeared in a few years.

Our family all went to elementary school in North Antler and later to high school in Lyleton. While Pierson was the postal address of the family, a good deal of shopping and schooling was done at Lyleton which was slightly closer to the home buildings.

The four children survived their parents who both passed away in the spring and fall of 1960. Father lived to be 88 and mother 83. They experienced the joys and hardships of their neighbors which included bank failure, unfortunate marketing of the 1915 bumper crop and the drought of the 1930's.

## FRANCIS HUGH BOYLE

- *Ila Boyle Edgar*

Francis Hugh Boyle was born on a farm at Mardale, Ontario, one of a family of nine children. In 1898 he came to the homestead of Thomas Freeborn in the district now known as Elva. He began farming in the North Antler district on the E.  $\frac{1}{2}$  of 9-2-28 and later acquired the S.W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of 15-2-28 (two acres of this quarter were reserved for the North Antler School in 1900).

In the winter of 1901 Harold Thackerey was left to do chores while Frank returned to Ontario to marry Jean Catherine Ledingham of Durham, Grey County. She was one of a family of twelve and the daughter of William and Elsperth Ledingham.

The bride and groom arrived in Pierson on March 2, 1902 by train. The day was beautiful and there was little snow on the ground. While in Pierson, they bought supplies, then they made their initial trip, with team and wagon, to their small new frame house which had replaced the original log one.



*Francis Hugh Boyles and his bride, Jean Catherine Ledingham, in Grey County in 1902.*

This was March on the prairies and the unpredictable happened. The following day brought a raging blizzard and with it complete isolation for the two weeks which followed. The bride had sufficient supplies for food but did suffer considerable embarrassment over lack of toilet facilities (an empty jam pail sufficed). Wasn't it fortunate that they had arrived back in time for Harold Thackerey to return to his home?



D1193. "Ruby" Toilet Sets, large handsome sets, double-shaded and tinted in pale blue or apple green, with heavy gold stippled edges. set of 10 pieces, \$3.75; set of 12 pieces .... 6.25

D1194. "Warwick" Toilet Set. New Art Nouveau enamelled decoration. tall graceful shapes, all colors under glaze, rich gold edges. full sets of 10 pieces 6.50

D1195. "Warwick" sets, decorated in Oriental blue de-ign, set of 10 pieces 5.00

Their summer conveyance was a two-wheeled cart and a "lifer" horse. Frank was fond of animals and a good horseman. Stories were told of the cross-country trips to the neighbors' when spasms of laughter often accompanied the "Royal Bumps" which resulted from crossing the buffalo wallows. Mrs. Boyle related with nostalgia the carefree attitude which prevailed among the young settlers of the west.

Tragedy came to the happy household in the spring of 1903, when Frank was seriously injured in the hip by a

kick from a horse. Following the accident at least two years were spent in bed; months at home and weeks in the hospital in Winnipeg.

But every cloud has a silver lining and new life and joy came into the home when Elsie Irene was born on October 29, 1903. Frank's brother Charlie, youngest of the Boyle boys, came from Ontario that spring to take over the work until Frank could manage again. Later, with improved health and hired help, Frank enjoyed life on the farm for a good many years.

The couple was blessed with more children as the years went by: Sarah, Marjorie, their only son, Charles, who was born prematurely, lived only a short time and was buried in the Pierson cemetery, and Ila Mae.

The family attended church and Sunday School regularly. An organ was acquired and many a happy "sing song" took place in the home. On Sunday it was confined to hymn singing, which was thoroughly enjoyed.

Methodist and Presbyterian ministers from Pierson came on alternate Sundays. Almost everyone in the district attended regardless of denomination. Early neighboring families included the H.Y. Riddells, C.A. Chalmers, R.A. Stinsons, W. Holmes, P. Toshes, T. Aitkens, C. Suskins, B. Fornans, F.H. Blands, G. Fennells, J. Crawford, S. Elgars, J. Breakeys, I. Breakeys, W. Horsleys, G. Barrows, W. McCormicks, H. Mayes, A. McNishes, T. Fentons and T. Maitlands.

The Sunday School picnic was often held at the home of R.A. Stinson and in July, 1912 it was in progress when an electric storm struck. With it came hail and a cyclone which completely destroyed the partially-sided frame of a large barn on the Boyle farm. The carpenters, one of them Mr. Humphrey, were having supper in the Boyle home when the chimney was torn off the house, some of the bricks were blown in through the west window across the kitchen to break plaster on the east wall. A deluge of rain followed, the crops were destroyed, and families returned to their homes with heavy hearts. The carpenters remained and the barn was rebuilt and painted the traditional red and white.

One of the worst blizzards of the century hit the district on March 17, 18 and 19 in 1919. About twelve pupils from North Antler School were brought with their teacher, R.E. Mayes, by team and sleigh with quilts and robes for protection from the storm; although it was only a quarter-mile journey, it was hazardous. Everyone was fed and kept overnight, the dining room floor providing sleeping accommodation for the young visitors.

Frank Boyle was one of the few who didn't contract the flu which reached the epidemic stage in the winter and spring of 1919, so he was able to assist neighbors who were less fortunate. So many deaths resulted that along with losses from the recent war, there were few homes which were not bereaved. In some cases, households were almost wiped out.

With the twenties came a degree of prosperity, but again in 1924, Frank had trouble with his injured limb and was taken to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. He was conveyed by team and sleigh to the train at Lyleton on a stretcher when he went to Rochester for treatment. Although bedridden for many months, he eventually was able to walk with crutches. With plenty of patience, courage and ingenuity, he also drove his car.

In October of 1925 Mr. and Mrs. Boyle disposed of their farm equipment and livestock, by auction, and took up residence in Lyleton. In town Frank was employed at the A.B. Murray garage. Here he enjoyed his work and many a good game of euchre and five hundred in the so-called "Millionaires' Club".

Elsie, who became chief operator in the local telephone office, was married to Gordon G. White on November 10, 1926. They first resided on the Bonner farm down on the border, which is presently owned by Jim Stephens.

In 1927, Sarah, who had taught school at Morris and Coultervale, was married to Walter Murray, Jr., and took up residence on the Walter Murray farm which was noted for its fine Percheron horses.

Mom Boyle found life in town different but challenging. She enjoyed sharing her home with one or two boarders and over a period of four years, many teachers and high school students had a home away from home. Her enthusiasm for a game of bridge and curling was keen, and along with membership in community organizations, she found plenty of diversion.

In 1931, less than a year after Marjorie's graduation as a R.N. from the Misericordia Hospital, the Boyle family lost their beloved father, following an illness of several months.

After nursing locally and in Winnipeg, Marjorie was married to Robert C. Murray in 1932. They took up residence in Melita where Robert owned the present Murray's Garage.

Iia completed high school and remained at home. She was employed in the new "Campbell's General Store" until her marriage in 1936 to J. Allan Edgar took place. They resided in Lyleton where Al was employed with his father in the coal, wood and dray business.

Mrs. Boyle, with the staunch faith which carried her over many a rough mile, enjoyed life in her own home, surrounded by her family, until shortly before her death in the Wilson Memorial Hospital in Melita in 1960.

The Frank Boyle family leaves no sons to help perpetuate the name but the four daughters and their families who submit this history have been left a host of happy memories and a heritage to cherish.

## THE EDGAR HISTORY

Charles Edgar was born at Compton-Dundon, Somerset, England, March 16, 1872. Charles, one of six brothers, left England at the age of 18 to come to Canada to seek work and adventure.

He arrived in Toronto to work for John Gardhouse, a prominent shorthorn cattle breeder on a farm close to Toronto, for eight years, and there he met Elizabeth Ann Mainprize of Woodbridge, Ontario, who later became his wife.

In April, 1898, Charles Edgar came west to Pierson, Manitoba and

worked for C.P.R. Railway for the summer. Later that fall he bought a livery stable in partnership with R.J. Tooke.

He began hauling lumber to the townsite of Lyleton in the spring of 1902 before the railroad was completed, for the construction of buildings including a livery stable. This was built in the fall of 1902, and proved to be the first of three, as two were destroyed by fire. He operated the Lyleton livery barn for over 40 years along with the coal and wood dray business.

He finished building his own house in the fall of 1903.

At which time in Winnipeg he married Elizabeth Ann Mainprize of Woodbridge, Ontario who had been born in 1875.

Four children were born from this union-Herbert and Allan of Lyleton, Beatrice, Mrs. C.J. Bill of Windthorst, Saskatchewan; and Kathleen, Mrs. Harry England of Winnipeg. Herbert and his son, Barry, continue to farm at Lyleton and Al has settled in Brandon where he drives a school bus.

### ANDREW BAIRD MURRAY

— *Vera Murray*

A.B. Murray was born in 1879 at the Gore in Oneida Township in Ontario. He was the youngest in a family of four boys and seven girls. At the Gore he worked on the farm, but harvest time always renewed his keen desire to "Co West" on the harvest excursions to the three Murray families: Robert, James and Walter, who were already well-settled in what became the Lyleton community. In 1898 he secured the half section which is now the Caney farm.

In 1899 he married Edith Suter, the teacher at the Gore school. In 1901 she and baby Ted accompanied her and Mr. and Mrs. Ed Gardiner and family by



*Wedding picture of Andrew Baird Murray and Edith Mary Suter in 1899.*

train to Pierson while A.B. Murray came with a carload of horses and machinery. The families were welcomed by the Murray families with whom they lived until their own small premises could be erected.

In 1903 a baby girl, Vera, was born in the new barn as a new house was not yet completed. Robert was born in this large two-storey house in 1904. The huge barn which was constructed at that time still stands. During the winter, Father undertook extensive interior painting in the new home. He soon became ill and Winnipeg and Toronto doctors diagnosed it as lead poisoning from the paint.

The large new home caught fire in 1907 and during Father's efforts to lift a large oaken sideboard containing dishes, silverware and linen, he injured his spine. Soon his arms and legs became paralyzed but with use of his arms and hands, regained some strength. (Perhaps the legs could have been returned to normal if crutches had been used and today's methods of therapy had been used.)

Father then rented the farm and moved to Lyleton where he became a machine agent. Business was done in the home, in a small shop, or in a buggy drawn by an Indian pony.

In the winter of 1909-10, when Frank Clark's new cement block house was completed, Father purchased the Clarks' well constructed frame house and hauled it by bobsleigh to the lot west of the new school. This house was enlarged considerably and in 1912, Margaret Agnes was born there.

The block of land directly south of the home and the school ground was bought to pasture the pony and a couple of cows and calves. Later there were Shetland ponies and colts purchased of which several were very valuable. These Shetlands spent much time out of the pasture as all the children enjoyed riding and driving them. In later years three valuable Shetlands were poisoned by contact with gopher poison.

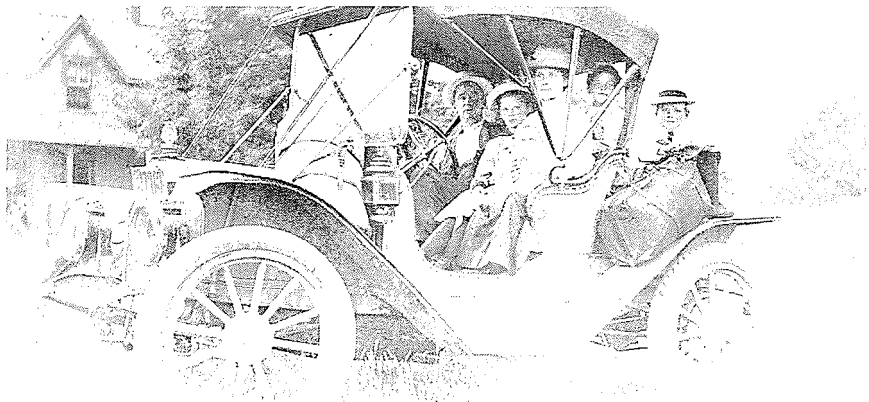
The large garden supplied dried corn and beans of a special variety for winter use. Chokecherries, wild plum, strawberries and saskatoons were fun to pick and more fun to eat. The winter hamper from the carload shipped from Gore County included five barrels of apples: spies, talman sweets, russets, baldwins and greenings, 50 pounds or more of honey and 20 pounds of maple syrup. Pears, plums and apricots were available in season at the store but Westhope and Antler offered 16 pound crates of peaches for 99 cents each. Peaches and cream, therefore, were a reality, not a dream! (The boundary line was there for us to see but there were no custom officers.) The meal supply was supplemented by wild geese and ducks as Father never missed the hunting seasons.

In 1913 Father, Mother and the family went to Ontario. Ford cars were available and one was bought and later shipped to Lyleton where it became Father's office.

It was equipped with a large hood to shelter us from the sun and rain, and places upon which to strap valises.

After Grandma Murray decided to remain in the west, she had the old





*Mr. and Mrs. A.B. Murray and family when visiting in Ontario in 1913. The car was shipped back to Lyleton.*

Kilmarnock grandfather clock, eight feet high in cherry frame, shipped to Lyleton in the carload of apples and placed in the home of her youngest son in keeping with the Scottish Baird tradition. The clock continued to work satisfactorily for many years and was later claimed by Robert and taken to his home.

In 1921 Father had a large two-storey bungalow home built directly west of Uncle Burleigh White's spacious new home. Both homes had been wired for electricity and became the first homes to have electric lights. A windmill charged the batteries at first, but later a Delco motor charged enough for a third home, Mrs. Boyle's.

Mother and Father were always interested in all community activities. Father's greatest pleasure was in the promotion of keen competition in baseball. Mother's interests centred in the church, W.I., and particularly in the Women's Missionary Society of which she was president for many years until overtaken by poor health. Death was a sweet release to her in 1946 after months of intense suffering from cancer.

Early in 1947 Father fell from his wheel chair, which he had used for 40 years, and injured a hip bone. He continued to maintain a keen interest in Lyleton until 1949 when he too passed away after months of battling cancer.

This couple had been blessed with two sons and three daughters. Ted

married Enid Kenner and became an implement and car dealer in Deloraine. Robert married Marjory Boyle and followed the implement business but has suffered ill health since the age of 17. Margaret married George Brown who was also a machine agent and now resides in Brandon, and I retired into my father's house after 21 years of teaching.

Many of the homemade rugs with Ontario scenes are still in use in the house today and serve to remind us of our parents who came "West to Lyleton",

## HOWARD RIDDELL

- *Lawday Hill*

Mr. and Mrs. Howard Y. Riddell and three children came from Huron County, Ontario, early in the year of 1899. When they reached Napinka, where they were visiting relatives, the two older children, Harold and Edith, were quarantined six weeks with scarlet fever. I, Lawday, less than a year old, came on with my father to his brother, Jim Riddell, at Pierson.

When Mother and other two were able to leave Napinka, we lived in Pierson for a short time before we came to the North Antler district in 1899 to keep house for William McCormick who was then a bachelor living in a sad house. We remained there about four years, during which time my brother Cecil was born in that sad house. Mr. McCormick decided to get married and built a frame house.

My father then bought the W $\frac{1}{2}$  of 10-2-28 from Billy Lee, where my younger brother, Walter and his wife now live and where he had been born along with another sister, Jean.

In 1907 just after giving birth to Jean, Mother was still in bed while the rest of the family had gone to a Sunday School picnic at Robert Stinsons. Cousin Bella Riddell had stayed to look after Mother and Jean. A wind, hail and rainstorm struck the area, windows were broken and doors torn off. A bedroom window in our house was broken and glass shattered over the bed and even into the baby's hair. The barn was literally picked up and set down again on top of the pasture fence. Of course, the crops in that vicinity were hailed out.

I think it was about 1910 when Andy Maitland, Frank Boyle, Chris Chalmers and my father acquired a threshing outfit. The Chalmers, Boyles and Riddells were almost inseparable. When the threshers were at one place the other two women with their children were on hand. Therefore, at times, there were more women and children than threshers, but there never seemed to be any shortage of food. Mr. Boyle, as I remember, always hauled grain and would often swipe a pie to take back to the outfit to share with his buddies. As soon as we were old enough to help, we were used to shovel grain in the granary or lift bags to the platform for emptying.

For years, Mother boarded the school teachers who taught at the North Antler school. At that time there seemed to be a different teacher each year. The barn on the farm was built in 1916 by Jack Pitt and his men from Pierson.

Mother and Dad left the farm to take up residence in Lyleton in 1939. Dad passed away in 1955 and Mother in 1957.

## RUSKIN HISTORY

- *Laura Edgar*

Charles Ernest Ruskin was born in London, England on October 16, 1876. He came to Canada at the age of 18 and worked in Quebec and Ontario on various types of farms.

He came west to Dauphin in 1899 and in the fall of that year, arrived in the Lyleton district to work for Mr. Alf Venton.

After deciding to settle in the North Antler district, Mr. Ruskin returned to England in the fall of 1903 and spent the winter in London.

On March 23 of 1904, he married Florence Ransom at West Norwood, England. They returned to Canada and settled on the farm where four children were born: John, who died in 1959, Ernest, who lives on the home farm, Laura (Mrs. Herb Edgar) of Lyleton and Irene (Mrs. A. Winlaw) of Winnipeg.

Mrs. Ruskin died at an early age in 1917 and Mr. Ruskin remained on the farm until his retirement in 1946. He then commuted between Vancouver, where he lived with his brother, and Lyleton, until his death in June, 1954.

## THOMAS RICHARDSON AND FAMILY

- *Barbara McMechan*

Relatives and friends already established in Canada, wrote letters home and on visits back to the old country, gave glowing accounts of life in the young settlement. Like many others who left comfortable surroundings and friends at home, Thomas Richardson of Dumfries, Scotland, sailed from Glasgow on May 26, 1899 with his wife, Margaret (who was a sister of John Harkness), and their three children: Robert, 15; James, 13½; and Barbara, 12 years of age.

Their boat, the "Sarmation", landed in Montreal where they spent the first night in Canada after 12 days at sea. The next day they left Montreal by train and reached Winnipeg several days later where they stopped over Sunday before coming on to Napinka. There the train stopped for the night and next day, June 13, they arrived at Pierson. John Harkness met them with a team and wagon and as they made their bumpy way along the prairie road toward Lyleton they had their first real view of the country that was to be their home. There were no trees or bluffs because of the prairie fires that frequently swept through, and one could see for miles around. It seemed very different from the beautiful Scotland they had left behind. They were simply amazed at the go-pers that seemed to running about everywhere and twelve-year-old Barbara was fascinated to learn that what she had thought looked like large eggs were in reality puff-balls!

Her uncle John Harkness took them to his home, south of Lyleton. He was then a bachelor and his new frame house was completed and in use.

The old sod house was still standing, and inside, still hanging on a nail in a post, was George Kennedy's old felt hat. Birds had built their nest in it.

As in all pioneer communities, neighbors were of the utmost importance, and those surrounding John Harkness were of the best—John and Andy Lyle to the north, Sam Lyle to the east, and Joe Hendersons were living in their sad house to the west. The south side of John Harkness' land bordered on the United States but the line in those days was practically non-existent. There was a customs officer at Melita who was seldom, if ever, seen, and as there was freedom to come and go, many friendships developed with neighbors to the south. In fact, the Johnsons, whose land bordered that of John Harkness, as well as many other American pioneers, even came to the Lyleton Post Office for their mail.

Pierson being the nearest town, most of their supplies were brought from there. The main trail from south of the border passed very close to John Harkness' house and all travellers were welcomed. Many stopped in for meals and sometimes for the night. People passed freely back and forth and it was not unusual to see as many as a dozen wagons stretched out down the road, as Americans hauled their wheat north to Pierson and went back home loaded with Canadian coal.

John Harkness had quite a number of horses, cattle, sheep and hogs and he kept three or four men to help with the work. One looked after the sheep, and in summer they were taken out to the prairie about fifteen or twenty miles northwest. The sheep herder lived in a caboose, and supplies were taken to him every week. At night the sheep were put in a corral to protect them from coyotes which were plentiful. Besides the work horses and colts, he had a dozen or so wild broncos and it was very exciting when they were being broken in. They never did become quiet like the work horses and always reared up at the start and were ready to run away any time.

A month after the Richardson family came to Lyleton, Robert, the oldest boy, went to his uncles, William and Tom Harkness in the Moose Mountains of Saskatchewan, and later homesteaded there.

The second boy, James, stayed and worked for his uncle, John Harkness. He was herding sheep at the summer camp, about fifteen miles northwest on what was called the herd ground, when he became ill. There was no one living near him to send for help, so he wrote a note and tied it to the neck of one of the sheep dogs and told it to go home. In a very short time the obedient animal delivered the message to John Harkness and James was taken to the hospital in Winnipeg. It was a long time before he was able to be around again and he was always very lame afterward.

The dog came to a sad end by gopher poisoning which happened to most of their good sheep dogs. John Harkness kept several of these well-known border Collies, imported from Scotland, and special mention should be recorded here of these faithful and well-loved creatures, and the example of almost human intelligence they displayed on numerous occasions.

After staying the first year with John Harkness, Thomas Richardson in 1900 bought a quarter section of land (S.W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  7-1-28) from Ernest Lyle three miles further west. He built a small house and barn, and with his wife,

Margaret, went there to live.

Just to the south were their nearest neighbors, the Philip and Abe Reekies, whose homesteads were now well established on the South Antler Creek along the U.S. border. They extended a warm welcome to the newcomers and this marked the beginning of a friendship that was to continue in their families for generations.

Thomas Richardson's land was at the eastern side of the Copley district which had been first settled by Copley Thompson and other young Englishmen in the early 1880's. A few years later, these Anglicans had built a beautiful little stone church on the S.E. corner of 14-1-29. The little red Copley schoolhouse stood not far from the church, about a mile west of Thomas Richardson's land. It had been built in 1895 and the Copley district was now settled by such pioneer families as the Winthropes, Speares, Tookes and others.

Thomas Richardson did not have long to enjoy his new home or his many new friends, for his death occurred in June 1903, at the age of 49 years, and 18-year-old James, now crippled, was left to carry on with his mother.

#### ISRAIEL PUTNAM CHENEY

- *Alvene Cheney*

Mr. Cheney was born April 12, 1876 in Dodge County, Minnesota. He came to Lyleton in 1900 and started a hardware store in partnership with his brother, John.

He was married to Meta Peitsch from Stockton, Minnesota in 1902 (about the same time as Charles Edgar married Elizabeth Ann Mainprize). At a party given in Lyleton to welcome the brides, Mr. Edgar was said to have won the main prize while Mr. Cheney won the Peitsch.

During the severe electrical storm in August, 1903, the hardware was destroyed. His brother John then moved to Alberta.

Four children were born to Mr. and Mrs. Cheney. Wayne, 1903, Kamsack, Saskatchewan; Ruth, 1906, California; Alvene, 1908, Minnesota; and John, 1916, Portland. Mr. and Mrs. Cheney passed away in 1945 and 1956 respectively.

#### THE ROBERT STINSON FAMILY

- *Edith Pate/nan*

In the years just before the turn of the century, our home farm was owned by William Walker where he lived with his wife and daughter, Minnie. It was known as the "Walker Stopping House".

Robert Stinson purchased the Walker land in 1900. His buildings on the bank of North Antler Creek included a sod barn, a frame stable and a small white frame house with a lean-to kitchen. In the winter of 1901, Francis Boyle did the chores while Robert Stinson, my father, returned to Harriston, Ontario,

married Emma Thackeray, and brought her as a bride to share his lot in the west.

In 1902 my father did chores for Francis Boyle while he made a similar trip east to bring his bride, Jean Ledingharn, to join the pioneer women of the west. Her brothers and my mother's brothers came west at that time but went further into the Territories to settle.

My mother's nearest neighbors were Alf Venton and his sister, the Boyles, Holmes and Harveys. She used to drive a horse and cart to Pierson to get groceries till Lyleton was established in 1905-06.

There were no fences to hamper trails along the creek and at times Indians passed along trapping or hunting what they could. Mother said that Mrs. Walker had told her that she need never fear their visits as long as they were shown kindness. They would sometimes share their fish in return for food which they had received. One year a group composed of four generations arrived and were so pleased when Mother gave them food and buttermilk and showed them how their papoose could use the high chair. They made much of the new barn which had been built in 1910 and were amazed and surprised when Mother played music for them on the Edison gramophone as they ate. As fences were built and game became less plentiful, the Indians' visits were less common.

### EDISON FIRESIDE \$28.60

8D7107. **Edison Fireside Phonograph**, combination type; will play all Edison records. Antique oak, new style design, with cover to match, both highly polished. Fireside type sectional horn, maroon japanned 'with gilt decorations: 19 inches long. Option: Edison Cygnet horn, black japanned finish, \$6.50 extra. Motor runs noiselessly. Can be wound while running. Reproducer has two highly polished sapphire points for playing both two and four-minute records. Size of machine - Height, 11 inches; base,  $9\frac{1}{4}$  x  $11\frac{3}{4}$  inches. **\$28.60**  
Price



There wasn't much in the way of entertainment but the people did much visiting and gathering in the homes to have a good sing-song around the organ or to play a game of croquet. Many were the good concerts of local talent and community singing which we had at North Antler School. The old stable walls bulged to hold the many fine teams, and the coffee which was carried over in a boiler from Mrs. Boyle's kitchen was declared "good to the

last drop." The Sunday School picnics and garden parties held on the lawn of Chalmer, Riddells or Westons were gala events with lots of good food.

In the summer of 1915, Jack Pitt and his carpenters, Andy Robinson, William Tooke, Davie Halliday, built a fine addition to our home. How my mother was able to feed carpenters and threshers that fall while the house was being remodelled has always been a mystery to me! Jack Pitt worked to 2 a.m. the day they connected the hot water front so the stove could be used for breakfast.

#### THE EDWARD A. GARDINER FAMILY

- *Andrew Gardiner*

Edward A. Gardiner and his wife, the former Jean Murray, came by train to Pierson in April, 1901 from Hagersville, Ontario. Their family included Wilbur, Ord, Gertrude and Andrew, who ranged in age from 14 years to three years. Their settlers' effects included household effects, machinery and live-stock.

They purchased the farm owned by Thickson family which had been formerly owned by John Ross which was the E.  $\frac{1}{2}$  of 32-1-28 and eighty acres of 5-22-28. At a later date they purchased the S.W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of 32-1-28 from the Goodfellow Brothers and the N.W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of 32-1-28 from the Wilcox family.

Their house, the present Ted Gardiner's home, was a two-storey, four-roomed frame house. In 1903 a daughter, Helena, was born. Two years later a new eight-roomed frame house was built at the cost price of \$1,850 and in 1910 a frame barn was built with a hay loft and hay slings.

Wild duck, prairie chicken and venison occasionally added variety to the diet of usual pork, beef and poultry which were raised and butchered for home use. Sugar was available in Pierson and later in Lyleton and maple syrup was shipped in from Ontario. Patchwork quilts were common on all beds and buffalo robes were used for warmth in cutters and sleighs. Reading material included the "Hamilton Spectator" and many small types of bibles and religious books from Father's uncle, Bishop Wilson, in New York. Spring brought the sulphur and molasses tonic and sometimes senna tea, Ugh! (The Indians picked senna roots for weeks in the Reston area.)

Schools attended by the family included White and North Antler until the Lyleton School was opened.

Wilbur and Ord went west to Aneroid, Saskatchewan to homestead in 1910. Edward A. Gardiner passed way in 1914 and Andrew and his mother carried on farming until 1924. From 1924 to 1959, Andrew and his wife, Loretta Shantz, farmed the home place. Mrs. Edward Gardiner was laid to rest in Lyleton cemetery in 1950.

#### GEORGE CANEY

-*Jim Caney*

Mr. George Caney was born in Ontario in 1875. He spent the early

Iyears of his life in that country. In 1903 he came to Manitoba where he settled on 26-2-27 in the Sourisford district on the banks of the Souris River.

He went to England in 1907, married Grace Annie Warns in London, and returned to Canada the following March. Their home was of wood construction where a coal and wood stove was used for heating and a coal oil lamp for lighting.

Three trips in the winter were made to Melita for groceries on the Souris River with team and sleigh. Any sickness was doctored with homemade remedies as doctors were too far away with poor means of transportation. The "Norwest Farmer" was one of the first papers and mail was received only twice a week.

Social activities were very few as winters were very cold and roads were often impassable. Card parties at the neighbors' offered some entertainment when the weather permitted. The Christmas concert, the big event of the year, was held in the small frame school house. This school house served also as a church during the summer. (The minister's salary was \$600.00 per year).

Mr. Caney moved the family to the Lyleton district in 1918 to a farm then owned by A.B. Murray, one mile north of Lyleton. Mr. Caney passed away in 1930. Mrs. Caney carried the farming with her two sons through the dirty thirties. She retired from farm life in 1948.

(Jim Caney, a respected and active member of Lyleton community, passed away suddenly in the spring of 1969.)

## J.A. SCOTT HISTORY

Mr. J.A. Scott came to Canada from Glasgow, Scotland in 1903 and was joined by Mrs. Scott and their son, Hector. The family resided in Pierson for two years and then moved to Indian Head, Saskatchewan where their daughter, Elsie, was born in 1905.

In 1906 the family moved to Lyleton where Jim Scott worked in Hector McCrae's store until he began to farm on the Sam Thompson land where Pres Bird now lives. Bob and Vina were born on this farm. Mr. Scott was a successful farmer, but received many hard knocks-hailed out two years in succession, and lost his barn by fire when the steam engine was being fired up at threshing time. They moved to the Redaway farm in the fall of 1916.

The Scots continued to farm until 1926 when they moved to the village of Lyleton where Mr. Scott started a meat and grocery business. He remained in this business until 1930 when the family moved back to Pierson where Mr. Scott was employed in the hardware business for approximately ten years.

The Scott family were well known for their musical ability and their solos, duets and quartettes were the highlight of many programs in the Pierson and Lyleton districts. This family also gave their time and talent to the Lyleton and Pierson choirs for many years.



The parents were residing in Lyleton at the time of Mrs. Scott's death in 1944. Mr. Scott lived in retirement until his demise in 1954.

#### DANIEL FENNELL

Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Fennel came from Ontario to Minnedosa and then by railroad to Lyleton to settle on the quarter section just west of Ross McNish's buildings where they lived in a sad house.

Mr. Daniel Fennell was well known throughout this southwest corner for his veterinary ability and many farmers with sick livestock called on him for his help. His sons, Tom and Joe, followed in his footsteps, and doctored stock.

Mrs. Fennell passed away in 1910. Her husband and son, Joe, batched until Mr. Fennell's health failed and he went to live with his daughter, Mrs. Herb Mayes.

Of the six girls and three boys in the family, two girls, Mrs. Herb Mayes (Maria) and Mrs. Stewart Elgar (Dollie) and the three sons, George, Tom and Joe, remained in the district.

Roy and Myrtle Law in Lyleton are Fennell descendants but Art Fennell is the only one in our district bearing the name.

#### FRANCIS JAMES LANG

Mr. Frank Lang was born at Milbrook, Ontario in 1889 and came west in his early years. At the age of 20 in 1909 he came to the Lyleton district where he married Ethel Jane Murray, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jim Murray, in 1914.

The young couple established a home and farmed for a number of years. In 1924 they left to take up residence at Coulter where Frank Lang was employed as postmaster and Pool Elevator agent. These positions were held until 1944 when the Langs returned to Lyleton. Here Frank assumed the duties as grain buyer for the Pool for a few years until he was transferred to Deloraine.

After three years there, he was forced to retire for reasons of failing health. The Langs then took up residence in Souris where he remained active in lodge and sports circles until his death in 1962. He was predeceased by his wife in 1954. At the time of her death she was an ardent member of the Rebekah Lodge in Souris. She was a faithful member of the United Church and, in her earlier years, had served as organist in the Lyleton United Church.

They raised a family of four daughters and five sons: Jean, Dorothy, Margaret, Lorraine, Francis, Murray, Andrew, Reginald and Everett. Everett passed away in his early years while Francis and Murray gave their lives in World War II, serving with the R.C.A.F.

J. NEWTON

- *Jimmy Newton, Antler, N. Dak.*

I sailed from Liverpool, England on Thursday, April 21, 1908. We tied up ten days later on Sunday, May 1 at Quebec, where we boarded an immigrant train and were in Montreal by midnight where we saw only the city lights. We travelled through northern Ontario, stopping at a small town on the north shore of Lake Superior. We were surprised to find that it was mid-winter there with two or three feet of snow and Lake Superior was frozen solid. By May 4 we had arrived in Winnipeg and found that it was spring there.

I was sent to work for Scotty McLaren who was living on the land owned by Joe Lawrence, near Cameron. I worked for Scotty until the end of October. How well I remember my first experience of threshing in Canada and driving a team with the bundle rack! It was a hard life sometimes.

Late in October we were threshing on George Leach's farm where we had to sleep in an empty stall in the barn. One cold night we put piles of straw into the stall for a bed and would have spent a comfortable night except for several large pigs which were also looking for a warm place to sleep. We got little sleep as we were kept busy all night driving them away. Like everything else, the night came to an end and as we were finished the next day, I went back to Scotty's.

Scotty McLaren was quite a character (part Scottish, which accounts for his name), but more Italian than Scottish. He could do more useless swearing than any man I ever knew.

In November I walked up the railroad track to Alex Linton's shack, where I lived until October, 1909 when Alex sold the farm to Mr. Murray.

I well remember that winter of 1908-09. Alec's sister was married that fall to Ray Speare and I had my first and only Christmas dinner at their home. That winter was a very cold one, especially to me who had just come from England where the winters were much warmer.

The shack was cold with only a little cook stove to heat it. I awoke in the mornings with one ear frozen and the fire out. First I would roll over in bed to thaw out the one ear, and then rise and quickly light the fire. As the kettle boiled, I thawed out my loaf of bread, fried some bacon and had breakfast. Not much variety in food; mostly bacon, bread and coffee. Lots of jack rabbits came to feed on the oat bundles and I would shoot a couple and boil them for dinner next day. It was a rough life, but I lived through it.

And how well I remember how we would drive out to the Cosgrove farm! There they would move the furniture, roll up the rug and dance until early morning while I sat in the corner playing waltzes and two steps.

When we played in the hall, May Speare played the piano, John Speare the cornet and Rush Cram from Antler played the trombone. I know the music wasn't much to brag about, but it was fun and I enjoyed it as it provided me with lots of friends throughout the years.

Jim Scott lived on the farm just north of the Alex Linton's farm, and Mr. and Mrs. Walton, Mandi, Lena and John. I believe they are all dead except

Mandi who lives in Vancouver. The Lee brothers lived on the North Antler Creek, George Leach and his sister were living just east of Frank Clark's. I believe Tom Lawrence was running a pool hall and confectionery near the livery barn. Local Option was in force then and Lawrence had (a keg of apple cider) shipped in, but it turned hard. After some of the boys got "high" on it, Lawrence was forced to dump it into the gutter (which was a shame as it was good cider!).

You could buy liquor in Melita. When some of the farmers went to Melita, they would bring back a bottle or two of Scotch. All the friends which they met on the road were offered a drink and often they arrived home with an empty bottle.

It was a delight to recall old times for the Lyleton book as it brought back many happy memories of good times and many good friends.

Several names of early pioneers were recalled by the Lyleton oldtimers, but little or no information could be obtained. Some of these were "ships which pass in the night" and either returned to their original homes or moved on further for adventure or gain. We would be remiss if we did not comment on as many of these as possible, several of whom are buried in this area.

Andrew and Jim Woods, brothers from Smiths Falls, Ontario, drove in from Emerson with a yoke of oxen and cart. They settled on 12-1-29. Andrew was the first blacksmith in the district. They both were buried in the Winslaw district.

Thomas Guest from Kincardine, Ontario, settled on S.W. 2-1-29 and later moved to Glencairn, northeast of Brandon. In 1885 Thomas Guest's little sister, Mrs. Duncan, came with her three small girls (one stayed in school in Ontario) to locate on S.W. 10-1-29. She was the only woman homesteader in the district. After proving up her homestead, she married Amos Snider of Sourisford.

George Goodfellow came to N.W. 32-1-28 in 1882 where he was joined by his brother Sam the next year. They remained for ten years before they returned to the east.

Thomas Peebles and Francis Exham, soldiers from the Riel Rebellion of 1885, settled on 18-1-28. Exham moved west in 1895 and Peebles married a sister of Alf Venton. Mr. Peebles died on his farm in 1908 and the unmarried daughter, Ada, died later in Winnipeg.

Samuel Bowlby, a veteran of the U.S. civil war, drove from Nebraska with pony and cart in 1886. He homesteaded on S.E. 24-1-29 and farmed there till his death in 1909.

Charles Reid came in 1889 from Ontario. He homesteaded on S.W. 12-1-28 but later he and his wife, a sister of Andy and Jim Woods, moved to Antler, North Dakota, where he managed a hardware store.

John Woolsey from Ontario settled on N.E. 10-1-28 in 1882. Ernie

Baynes, an Englishman, settled on N.W. 10-1-28 in 1887. He married Sarah Woolsey (the first marriage in that district.) A few years later they all moved to British Columbia.

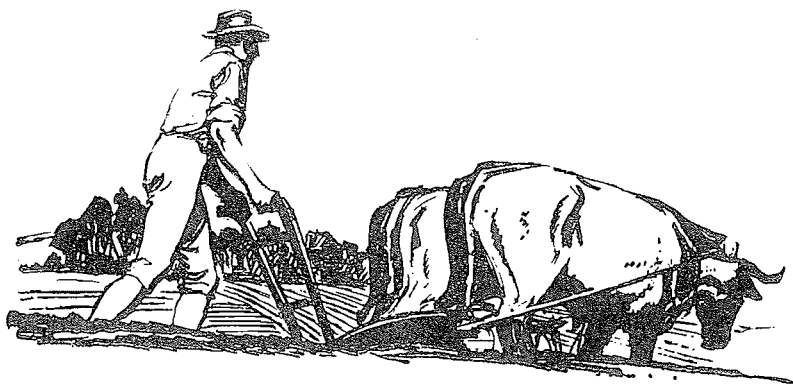
The Tyler family came in 1886 and settled on S.W. 12-1-28. Johnny Tyler homesteaded what is now the Waiser quarter. His father and mother lived with him until their retirement to Winnipeg. Later Johnny moved west to the present day Sturch land and ran a herd. Later a sister arrived in the district and they lived in Jessie Little's house.

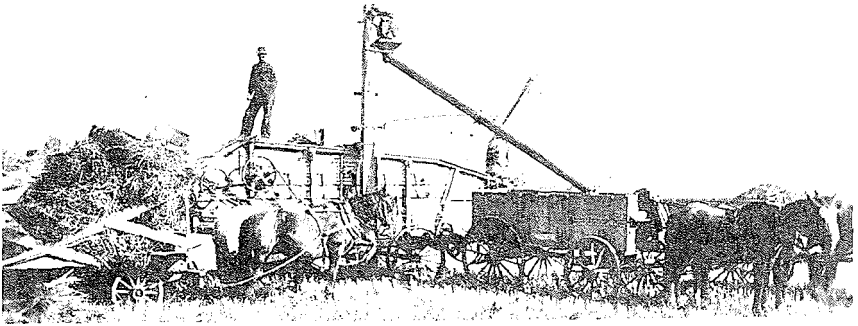
G.H. Gale, a young Englishman, settled on S.E. 2-1-29 but later moved to Oakland, California.

Riley Sheriff completed his homesteading duties on S.W. 28-1-28 and then returned to the east.

Sam Seiffert of Ontario settled on S.E. 22-1-28 but later sold his farm to Robert Murray in 1890.

Mrs. A.W. Reekie recalled as many names as possible, but the committee realizes that there are omissions for which we apologize, but have no possible remedy.





*A ctivity around the  
threshing machine.*



*Team and reaper  
cutting flax in 1914.*



*Hauling grain to the elevator.*



*Two six-horse teams at work.*

## LYLETON DISTRICT SINCE 1910

The space devoted to the individual pioneer has varied according to our source of information. Since memory can be faulty, we apologize for any errors in our chronicle or the inadvertent omission of names which should have been included. Since the town and countryside had developed into a thriving community by 1910, we assume that later settlers could not be classed as pioneers. However, two names must be mentioned along with the pioneers as they too experienced hardships and adversities.

The first of these would be Mrs. Kathleen Richardson Sturch who came to the district as a bride in 1919. Due to misfortune, depression and widowhood, she worked as hard as any pioneer mother to raise one son and five daughters (one of whom is Mrs. George Kelly of Lyleton). Mrs. Richard baked for bachelors, boarded construction crews, sewed, raised chickens and rebuilt the station in Lyleton in 1945. Mrs. Sturch is indeed made of pioneer material.

The second family pioneered in the area of a new language, a strange country and different customs. Mr. and Mrs. Waiser, of Polish origin, arrived in Lyleton in 1916 where seven children were born to them. They accepted the new way of life and became an important part of the Lyleton community. Mr. Waiser passed away in 1968.

Mention must also be made of the Sturchs, Jack Stephenson, Jack Parsons, and Frank McMechan who have always been part of the Lyleton community activities.

BJ.F. Breakey recorded for us some of his thoughts of the early 20th century.

Water was a problem in the area. One day a "water witcher" came along and for \$5.00 guaranteed to find a good source of water; with a two-foot forked willow stick held in his hands, with the thumbs up and pointing outwards and downwards, he walked around the north bank of a draw about a quarter of a mile from the barn and the willow bent straight down at one spot. A well 20 feet deep reached, what in the opinion of many, was the best spring water in the district. Peering into the deep black hole, one could see a little stream flowing slowly through a bed of gravel. For years this method has been treated rather derisively. However, four years ago, a Dutch scientist made a thorough scientific study of the method and concluded that some people are sensitive to extremely faint electrical impulses in their wrists, which can be picked up from water courses by a green willow fork.

James Breakey was the first farmer in the district to grow "Durham" wheat (100 acres, 1921). The yield was 20 bushels per acre, much higher than the Marquis type. Some neighbors referred to him as the "Durham King". He was also rated as a good horseman and with Robert Murray of Lyleton, imported

a purebred Clydesdale stallion named "Baron Albert" from Scotland. Horses were important to him and he took great care of them; at a North Antler School Board meeting someone remarked that "Jim Breakey's stable was cleaner than the school.' For years his stable was cleaned four times each day and swept with a house broom at least once!

During the First World War, a "Beef Ring" was established by the local farmers. It worked simply by electing one farmer to do the butchering and each week one farmer donated a "beef" to the ring. A "Beef Ring House" was built and lined with bins. Each farmer's bin was marked with his name and in turn families got different cuts of beef each week. The wives stitched the family name on two bags-one for the week's cut of beef and one was left for the next week's roast or shank.

Co-operative purchasing of apples and twine began about 1915- usually under the auspices of the United Grain Growers.

School played an important part in the lives of all. It was the centre of the community. The outstanding event was the Christmas concert. Families arrived in sleighs-with grain boxes on top-benches and genuine buffalo robes inside. There were bags of warm oats or warm bricks for tender feet. Recitations-short plays and school songs made up the program.

Of the many teachers North Antler had, two stand out in the memory of many-Miss Turner, now Mrs. Hector McNish, who was kind, gracious and very inspiring; a lady who taught by example and precept; the other was Mr. Ralph Mayes, son of Herbert Mayes, a local farmer. Ralph was a stern disciplinarian and absolutely refused to accept anything less than your best efforts.

Mrs. James Breakey is still living and at 98 years of age, is quite a remarkable woman. There was no organized law enforcement west of the Great Lakes when she was born in 1868. When she was five years of age, 120,000 buffalo were shot on the prairies and the hides sold in St. Louis. Her family recall her sitting on her knees in front of the oven learning some of the alphabet from the stove guard on which was embossed-"Happy Thought Range-Buck Stove Company Limited, Brantford, Ontario". Incidentally, she recalls Mrs. Robert Murray (Sr.) telling of her early days when Mr. Murray transported her to a neighbor's place on a chair tied to a cowhide pulled by a horse!

A word about the North Antler district in general. It was made up, for the most part, by Ontario settlers. A more God-fearing, honest group of people could not be found anywhere. The term "A man's word was his bond" applied to these farmers in the fullest sense of the statement. The term "neighbor" meant just that-friends who were sympathetic, understanding, and more important, helpful.

Farm boys were called "hicks" by the town boys and when in town they probably envied their town cousins who had no chores to do. For many farm boys, this envy disappeared as soon as they reached home. A sense of propriety-a fitness of things-of ownership and accomplishment would surge over you and naturally made you confident of your ability to do things-feed a calf, break a horse to ride, run a tractor, plow a straight furrow. No town boy could do these things.

Cash was in short supply-many boys trapped gophers. The municipi-

pality paid a bounty of three cents per tail one year. The Millers were reported to be the best trappers with a catch of 800 gophers one year.

The harvest excursions from the east brought in men occasionally (many union men). They would jump off at each station and ask, "What are you paying? What are the hours?" James Breakey's reply would be \$4.00 a day and if you can't do a day's work in 18 hours, we will give you 24."

Security, unions, old age pensions were not discussed; perhaps they were unknown. The family knew a security that perhaps would be well for our social welfare state to reflect upon. It was based on the principal that hard work, faith in yourself, your loved ones, in God and country was, and still is, the only worthwhile security. No one looked for, or for that matter wanted, hand-outs. No government agency can replace the security of the farm family which was based on the number of bags of potatoes, barrels of apples, sacks of flour and sides of pork stored in the cellar in December every year."

The war years from 1914 to 1918 were hard, and left their imprint on Lyleton district. Mrs. Edith Pateman recalls "the house parties and sock shows of the First World War. The women knitted and baled the socks for overseas, sometimes with a note in the toe to which they often received a reply from a lonely and homesick soldier. Armistice Day was a glorious and long-awaited day."

*Laura J. Murray*  
Signature of Registrant

 CANADA REGISTRATION BOARD

This certificate must NUMBER  
always be carried 181 47 368  
upon the person of  
the registrant

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT

*Mrs Laura J. Murray*  
residing at *Lyleton*  
*Man* was duly registered for the national purposes  
of Canada this *22* day of *June* 1918  
*Robt Dougall*  
Deputy Registrar

In 1917 the women were registered and had received the vote by 1918. Lyleton farmers began to organize a shipping organization as described by W.J. Murray:

"From the first time that the first settlers were established in the Lyleton district, it was the aim of these hardy pioneers to be as independent as possible. Although wheat was the main cash crop, every farmer raised a few cattle, hogs and poultry. Soon there was a surplus of livestock in the community and the only livestock market was in Winnipeg.



# HONOR ROLL - 1914 - 1918

*Lest We Forget*

Andrews, A.  
Anderson, W.A.

Belchamber, I.I.  
Bishop, H.C.  
Blower, G.  
Breakey, W.J.  
Buick, J.  
Burnett, G.

Caste, W.  
Clark, C.  
Cosgrove, A.a.  
Cosgrove, J.G.  
Cosgrove, G.  
Cook, R.  
Crossman, G.  
Coward, A.  
Cleaver, J.R.

Day, C.  
Dunnett, W.

Elliot, E.  
Elliot, G.  
Ewan, G.W.  
Ennis, I.

Featherstone, L.  
Finley, R.  
Finley, W.  
Fletcher, W.E.  
Frederick, J.P.

Gardener, A.M.  
Ginn, T.  
Gillespie, D.

Graham, J.  
Granby, W.  
Green, S.

Harrison, R.  
Hart, H.C.  
Henderson, J.  
Henderson, W.  
Hill, F.  
Hopwood, C.A.  
Howard, N.B.  
Hughes, R.  
Hunt, A.  
Hutchins, F.  
Howse, C.W.  
Hunt, W.

Jackman, G.  
Jellis, A.

Kennedy, J.  
Kilfoyle, R.  
Knott, G.

Lang, J.  
Lee, J.  
Leitch, T.  
Longstaff, W.  
Loveridge, A.

Mayes, H.  
Mayes, R.E.  
Miller, G.  
Moffat, W.R.  
Murray, A.A.  
Murray, C.S.  
Myles, C.  
Myles, V.

McKinnon, R.  
McRaie, D.

Nicholson, R.

Pateman, E.  
Persons, G.  
Portman, H.G.

Reekie, W.  
Reekie, G.A.  
Robinson, B.  
Rowan, A.

Scott, Charles  
Scott, A.  
Severn, V.I.I.  
Smith, G.  
Smith, T.  
Stewart, R.  
Stephenson, J.  
Sutton, J.

Thorne, H.  
Tooke, N.  
Tooke, R.  
Thunder, E.H.

Webb, H.  
Webb, G.  
Webb, W.  
Webster, J.  
White, W.R.  
Worrall, A.  
Wilson, A.

Yates, W.

A few farmers soon became known as drovers who travelled the country purchasing surplus stock and shipping it to Winnipeg. The late T.E. Brewster was most prominent among these men in this district. He bought a small building at the C.P.R. stock yards enclosing platform scales and if you could not arrive at a price, he would take your stock and sell it in Winnipeg at one cent a pound, although today one cent a pound would not seem out of the way! Prices at that time were much different to the present prices of today-five cents a pound being a good price for a prime steer and five to ten cents a pound for hogs live weight.

Farmers decided they could save money by shipping their own live-stock to Winnipeg. Thus on November 10, 1919, a meeting was called of all the farmers in the district in the old Oddfellows' Hall to organize a Shipping Association. A representative of the United Grain Growers was present to help organize. R.J. Tooke was nominated for chairman. After a good deal of discussion, the following directors were nominated for the first year: R.J. Tooke as chairman, R.A. Stinson as Secretary, Andrew Lyle, John Renwick, Henry Downey (of these only John Renwick is alive today). The money was borrowed from The Home Bank, the scale building purchased from Mr. Brewster.

E.M. Lyle was the first agent to ship stock for the association. The first procedure was to phone Mr. Lyle, telling him what you had to ship and estimate its weight. When Mr. Lyle considered he had a carload listed, he ordered a stock car from the C.P.R. and arranged to have the stock brought in on a given day. This was the general procedure carried out as long as it was feasible to ship stock by C.P.R.

The last shipment by C.P.R. was made in 1948. During this time we were able to save the farmers a good deal of money although the price varied. From time to time we were to ship for as low as fifty cents per hundred. The different shipping agents were: E.M. Lyle, R.A. Dougall, J. Richardson, John Reekie, Charles Edgar, and J.A. Edgar. Practically every district farmer's name appears in the book. Most, if not all, acted as director for one or more years. Thus with the changing of times and the coming of the trucks, another era was ended for us still living."

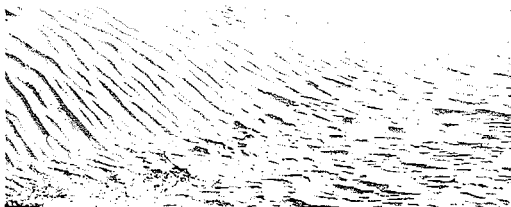
The Co-op located in Lyleton in 1960 and store records reveal a \$44,000 turnover in the store and \$25,000 from fuel. The Lyleton farm still depends on wheat production.

Mrs. Barbara McMechan recalled the post-war years. "It was becoming apparent that times would not always be prosperous on prairie farms and that neither the population nor the land were heavy enough to support so many business places in each little town. Gradually many of these closed down and probably none were so sorely missed as the resident doctor of some time before. Sickness, always man's worst enemy, was even more to be dreaded in a prairie community. A special tribute is due Miss Elizabeth Reekie, a registered nurse who came home during the terrible flu epidemic of 1919 and stayed to give freely of her skill and knowledge. For many years she went whenever needed to any home, sometimes on horseback in the dead of winter, and her presence brought recovery whenever possible and comfort always. Her life was devoted to others and her death in 1965 at the age of 76 was keenly felt by all who had known her.

Next came the "roaring twenties", and prohibition in the United States in the early twenties brought "rum-runners" by the door on the way to Gainsborough, Saskatchewan and back across the border into the States with their cargo. They would sometimes stop to ask the way, and on one occasion when Frank was away threshing, Barbara, alone with her small children, saw a most unusual sight ' Seven big new black shiny cars were winding their way along the quiet prairie trail in front of her home. They were heading back southeast to cross over into the States at Westhope, where about this time a night watchman was killed trying to stop the illegal trafficking in liquor.

By now almost every farm home had the telephone; the Model T Ford was a fairly common sight, as well as horses and buggies; and very rarely, perhaps only once in several years, the roar of a small airplane would bring the whole family scurrying outside to look up and try and get a glimpse! Radio was coming into a few homes, and about 1929 the last Chatauqua passed through the country. This was a travelling troupe of vaudeville entertainers. Everyone turned out for the big event which lasted a week, and though \$10.00 was a lot of money in those days, it bought a season ticket for a whole family and no one thought of missing the show!

The year 1929 brought the stock market crash followed by the world-wide depression which caused hard times everywhere. The prairie farmer, long accustomed to a scarcity of money, now, because of the extreme drought which struck the country in the early thirties, was faced with the added problem of trying to find feed for his livestock. Grasshoppers came in hordes and army worms made their relentless march across the country. Only ragweeds and Russian thistles flourished, and through it all, dry winds continually" blew more and more of the topsoil from the land. Water levels were lowered and livestock had to be shipped out. Cattle shipped to the Winnipeg market did not bring enough to pay the freight on them.



*Soil blown from farmland fills roadside ditches.*

Farmers were destitute; all creditors tried to collect debts. Considerable time and effort were spent spreading grasshopper poison and watching the sky for clouds. Any cloud which did appear went down on record as "an empty going back". People, who could, made themselves "Bennett Buggies" by making a

hitch for horses in front of the car. Would they ever be able to afford gas again?

Then on June 30, 1935 the rains came! The sloughs, ravines and creeks were full to overflowing. Nine inches of rain recorded in that one week: Only those people who came through the "dirty thirties" know what courage and self-reliance it took to maintain faith in their country."

Vera Murray recalls that "during the 'never-to-be-forgotten dirty thirties'", Father remember the countless areas of trees on all Ontario farms and assumed that trees might prevent the soil from drifting from quarter to quarter. In the Manitoba government there was very slow response to the elire need in southwestern portion of Manitoba. After much opposition, the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act was passed in 1935 (to mitigate the effects of drought in the future). Father convinced his nephew, Andrew Gardiner, of the value of trees and Andrew became one of the first in the area to plant miles and miles of tree strips in each quarter according to the government plan which called for 40 rods between strips. These strips consisted of caragana, maple, ash, elm, chokecherry or plum. Father's choice for the Experimental Farm for the country was on the Charles Edgar's half section, one quarter mile north of Lyleton, where the soil was badly eroded. After such persuasion, there was consent and Jack Parsons gladly agreed to have his adjoining half-section the sub-station. The weather conditions improved, fortunately, and the land became productive once more. However, the \$5.00-a-mile for planting the trees and \$15-a-mile annually for maintenance for five years helped to put change in the farmers' pockets. Farmers have come from other areas in Manitoba, from Saskatchewan, and from North Dakota in recent years, to evaluate the worth of tree-stripping and to consider the promotion of similar action in their own areas."

In the years following the depression, the crops improved and tractors gradually took over from horsepower. The royal visit of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth aroused a stir in Canada in May of 1939. The visit was overshadowed by war clouds again building over Europe. Hitler was no longer just a paper hanger! The boys were mobilized and moved into action quickly. The war was now fought from the skies and the "dark days of London" are well remembered. School children saved for war-saving stamps; sugar, tea and gasoline were rationed. News was broadcast steadily and war programs were exchanged with the service bases. Labor was at a premium and women took up tractor and truck driving. A number of Indians from Norway House were brought in one year for harvest help.

In May 1945 the European was over! But the Japanese war required the release of an H-bomb to bring capitulation in August of that year. Most of the boys returned and peace time activities resumed while the district remembered those who had laid down their lives.

In the late 1940's, the oil i'boom" was being experienced in the prairies. Vera Murray recalled that her father "was jubilant in 1948 when the Souris Valley Oil Company desired oil leases from the land owners. They were met with some resistance by farmers who feared that their land would be molested. However, land leases were issued but oil has not been located yet in the Lyleton

## HONOR ROLL 1939 - 1945

Andrew, Grant	IVicArthur, Winston	Garbutt, Ernest
Annetts, Martha	McMechan, Dennis	Garbutt, Russell
Annetts, Sara	IVJcMichael, Mickey	Gardiner, Edward
	McNish, Garnet	Gardiner, Orland
* Bambridge, James	Millar, Angus	Greenley, Merton
Barbour, Harry	Millar, Claire	
Barrows, Iloyd	Murray, Clair	Hartley, Robert
Barrows, Royd en	Murray, Clarence	Hartley, William
Beaumont, Jack	Murray, Donald	* Hayden, Clifford
Bell, Francis J.M.	Murray, Ewart	Hayden, Delmar
Bennett, Jack	Murray, Glen	Hayden, John
Bennett, William	Murray, Robert	Hayden, Morris
Bland, George		Hayden, Wilfred
Bonner, Earl		Hill, Bertram
Bonner, Robert	O'Brien, Joseph	Hinds, George
Breakey, Bert	Opperman, George	Hoggarth, Grant
Breakey, Gordon		Howard, Bruce
Breakey, Iva, N/S	Pateman, Orlove	
Breakey, Olive		Jack, Dan
Breakey, Reta, N/S	Raeseid, James	
Brewster, Leonard	Reekie, Archie	Kelly, George
Browne, Jack	Riddell, Cecil	Kennedy, Frank
Browne, James	Robinson, Eric	* Kennedy, Fred
Buick, Allan	Rousch, William	Klein, Frank
* Buick, John		* Knox, Lloyd
	Schell, Walter	
Charles, Donald	Schottenbauer, Andrew	* Lang, Francis
Clarke, Franklin	Sifton, Ralph	Lang, Laura
Clarke, Hewson	Simpson, Percy	lang, Iyle
Clubb, Verne	Smith, Delbert	* lang, Murray
Creight, Bertal	Smith, Louis	langford, Charles
Creighton, Foster	Speare, Cecil	lawrence, John
Creighton, Walker	Speare, Robert	Lawrence, Sydney
Creighton, Orval	Spratt, Evelyn	lawrence, William
	Spratt, Lorne	Ledingham, Archie
Day, Lloyd	Spratt, Morley	Lendrum, George
Dougall, Eugene	* Stinson, Iloyd	levins, Fredrick
Downey, Francis	Sturch, Joseph	Levins, Jack
Downey, Ieighton		* Levins, Milford
Downey, Royden	Tooke, Merle	loveridge, Bert
* Dyker, Allan		Lyle, Allan
	Vickers, Christopher	Lyle, Elmer
Fennell, Norman	Vickers, Robert	Lyle, Omar
Fenton, Edward	Vickers, Ellen	
Forman, Charlie		Maclean, Audrey
Fornwald, Edward	Walser, Edmund	Maclean, Cameron
Fornwald, Nelson	Waiser, Joseph	Maclean, Clifford
Fournie, William	Waiser, Thaddeus	Maclean, Douglas
Fournie, Lewis (Pete)	Walkeden, David	* Maclean, Harold
	Walkeden, Tom	Mallo, George
* Killed in Action	Walker, Edward	Marshall, Victor
	Wilson, Alvin	Mayes, Birdie
	Worrall, James	Mayes, Harold

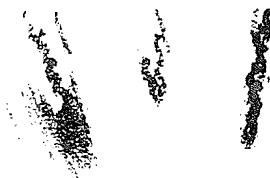
area, although many productive wells are to be found within a radius of a hundred miles in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and North Dakota."

Mrs. Barbara McMechan, at 80 years of age, summed up her pioneer days: "Thinking so much recently of the old days, though we did not have the conveniences of the present time, we found pleasure in our simple life. It did not take much to amuse us and though our mode of transportation was slow, there was time to think and to enjoy living."

Jean Bourne and Anne Murray summed up the changes: "All that first generation of settlers have gone to their reward. Now we look to their descendants, the third and fourth generation of those wonderful pioneers, to carry the torch passed on to them by brave, resourceful men and women of vision, who endured unbelievable hardships, established church and school, left prosperous tree-lined farms, prairie trails built into smooth highways, where the auto and truck or tractor find no horses to frighten any more. Gone are the slow oxen and the plodding teams. Yes, even most of the cows are gone and farmers buy bread, butter and milk, shipped in from the cities. Yes, the fertile fields still yield the golden grain. Instead of binder, threshing machines and good old Dobbyn, there are huge tractors equipped with umbrellas and radio, combines and hay loaders, and all types of expensive machinery outside, as well as tap water, refrigerators and deep freezers, gas stoves and electric lights inside. This progress tells the present generation what the pioneers endured in order that the country might be a better place for us to live.

"Through summer's heat and winter's snow, they builded better than they knew."

The peaceful Lyleton cemetery became the resting place for many of these worthy men and women. A fitting epitaph for each headstone would be, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."



## FINAL TRIBUTE

This history could not have been completed without the aid and co-operation of many individuals. Thank you to all those who wrote items and family histories and loaned pictures so willingly.

It is a special pleasure to thank Connie Davidson, "The adopted daughter of Lyleton", for the diligence with which she applied herself to the task of compiling the various histories and facts which gave birth to "Gnawing at the Past",

She would wish to acknowledge assistance from the C.P.R. and C.N.R. offices, the Department of Education, Foster Chalmers of the Lands Branch, the late Mr. Ketcheson of Melita New Era, The Brandon Sun, and Mrs. Kaye Lowe, the Manitoba Hydro, and the Manitoba Telephones, Simpsons-Sears for photostats of early merchandise, Carol Young, the typist, and June Welsted, the proof-reader, and to many others like J.S. and Roxy Cosgrove who were willing to answer all questions.

We have been made to feel very humble in the presence of these Giants of the Past. We remember their kindly humor, their youthful spirits, their loyal hearts and their indomitable courage. What a debt we owe to those of our pioneers! These men and women who laid the foundations of this prosperous community, back in the days when strength of body equalled strength of heart. In company with others of their sturdy fellows, they hewed homes out of the wilderness to build the beginnings of the modern settlement we know today.

To the memory of these stalwart people we dedicate this book and re-dedicate our faith in our country.

*"To the rapidly thinning ranks of the pioneers,  
To the memory of those who have finished their course,  
Who in faith ventured into the unknown land and tamed a wilderness,  
Who shared their limited resources with their less fortunate neighbors,  
Who remained steadfast in the midst of trials and adversities and laid the  
cornerstone of our present prosperity.  
Who had as their only stay, a firm faith in God."*

*Amen.*

- History Committee of  
Lyleton Women's Institute

Manitoba Legislative Library AB GEN c.2  
F/5649/L94/GenA  
GROWING at the past



3 6970 0013117 8